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The Week-end Review

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THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION—The Week-end Review. *Incorporating The New Statesman, The Nation and Athenaeum, Week-end Review.*

PUBLIC tributes to princes do not always square with what is said of them in private. In the late King of the Belgians nobody has any holes to pick; and save for some rhetorical exaggeration, the praises that have been showered on him have been sincere and well-merited. A quarter of a century ago there was a crook on the throne in Brussels, surrounded by crooks, and the Congo scandals had made Belgium stink in the nostrils of the world. When Albert succeeded his uncle Leopold, he altered all that. He purged the Congo, and he purged the court at home. In the war he was seldom far from the front line, and his fortitude aroused not merely sympathy, but general admiration. Afterwards, in the troubled years of peace, he did his job as a constitutional sovereign loyally and ably. But few kings can have had less love for regal pomp and shams. He was modest and unostentatious in his ways. He preferred his bicycle to a state-carriage, his bowler or his beret to a crown or a cocked hat. He was "democratic" in the popular sense of the word. If Belgium had been a republic, he would have been content to be its President, and Belgium could not easily have found a better one.

Mr. Eden's Quest

Mr. Eden's quest of the Grail continues in the capitals of Europe. He has had his disarmament "conversations" in Paris and Berlin, and he has now moved on to Rome in order to discover what contribution the Duce and his Fascists are prepared to make to the great cause of disarmament. We have some sympathy for Mr. Eden in his hopeless peregrinations, for he is one of the few Ministers in the Government who show some signs of intelligence and sincerity in their attitude towards foreign affairs. One must, however, be abnormally optimistic if one does not see that now only a miracle would enable Mr. Eden to save anything out of the wreckage of the Disarmament Conference. The conversations both in Paris and in Berlin are reported to have been "very useful"; Mr. Eden and Herr Hitler "appear to have got on very well together"; "in a spirit of perfect frankness and friendliness" the Ministers "exchanged views." We have heard these dreary formulae hundred of times in the last ten years, and we all know what they mean; they mean "nothing doing" in Paris, Berlin, Rome and London. In theory, Mr. Eden is trying to get an agreement between France and Germany which will enable France to disarm. In fact, he is trying to get France to consent to the rearmament of Germany on a very considerable scale. That he cannot get any agreement is largely due to the policy of Sir John Simon and of the Government of which Mr. Eden is a member. Our Government is not itself anxious to disarm; it has never shown itself ready to agree even to supervision and control of armaments; it will give France no "security" if France disarms. It has, therefore, nothing to offer to France as the price of French disarmament and no ground to stand on against the German claim to rearm.

The Brussels Congress

Though the official disarmament negotiations cannot inspire anyone with optimism, there is no doubt that any Government which took a bold and firm line in the direction of peace and disarmament would find a good deal of support in the public opinion of non-Fascist countries. This was the moral of the International Congress in Defence of Peace held in Brussels, which had the enthusiastic support not only of League of Nations Societies, but of ex-Service men and the Belgian Socialists. The Congress called for a strengthening of the League, disarmament, supervision and control of armaments, international control of civil aviation, and the creation of an international air force. Perhaps the most significant thing in the Congress was the speech by Mr. Rosenberg, Councillor of the Soviet Embassy in Paris, for it showed once more that the militarism of Japan and Germany is bringing the Soviet Government into closer and closer co-operation with the League. Mr. Rosenberg made it clear that his Government attached great importance to a strengthening of the League system by the adoption of a definition of aggression such as has been included in the recent treaties signed between Russia and her neighbours. The entry of the Soviet Union into the League would be a strange—but not impossible—sequel to the withdrawal of Japan and Germany.

Unhappy Austria

The Austrian "revolt" has been crushed, and on another page of this issue we print an article from an authoritative source, showing who were the real villains of the piece. Now we can only hope that Dr. Dollfuss's promise of "no retaliation" will be honoured, and that this will mean not merely an end to hangings and shootings of captured Socialists, but abstention from any such campaign of persecution as was instituted by the Nazis in Germany. But the Chancellor's own position is one that nobody would bet on. He is still a bondsman of the Heimwehr Fascists, and threatened by the Nazis —who have graciously given him till the end of the month to come to terms. There have been rumours that he would like to break away from his super-Fascist masters, and pursue a milder form of dictatorship. But if he did, on whom could he rely for support? There are other rumours of an attempt at a Habsburg restoration, with grim reminders of the hostility that that would arouse in Rumania and Jugoslavia. As for Herr Hitler, he is no rumour, but a very menacing fact. Against any open aggression on his part both Italy and France may be expected to take a firm line. For the moment they have had to be content with a renewed declaration in which Great Britain has joined, that Austrian integrity and independence must be respected. That does not so far represent a new commitment for this country, and we hope it never will. But it is emphatically to our interest that in the existing state of affairs Germany should not swallow Austria.

Is Germany a Civilised State?

Dimitrov and his fellows are still languishing (if that is not too mild a word!) in their German prison. It was thought, after they had been made Soviet citizens last week, that they were on the point of release, and, indeed, Herr Hitler said so quite plainly. But General Göring, it seems, has other ideas. He sticks to the opinions which he expressed with such ferocity at the trial, and he sees no reason why a man so dangerous to society as Dimitrov should be let loose. This affair has become a scandal of the first magnitude, and the feelings of the vast majority of Englishmen about it were voiced by the *Times* on Wednesday in a remarkably outspoken leader—in which the question was seriously asked whether we could continue to place Germany in the category of civilised nations. If there has ever been any foundation for the belief that the Nazi Government are sensitive to foreign opinions they ought to take notice of such a statement coming from such a source. Meanwhile, Englishmen who wish to make their personal protest will have an opportunity next Monday at the Kingsway Hall in London. A meeting is to be held there at 8 p.m., over which Mr. Pethick-Lawrence will preside, and there will be well-known speakers from all parties. In the event—unlikely, we are afraid—of the Bulgarians being released before next Monday, the meeting will still take place to urge the release of Herr Torgler. His treatment also is a violation of the elementary canons of justice.

Employment in the U.S.A.

Interest in the United States is at present centred largely on the future of the Civil Works Administration, which President Roosevelt has been endeavouring to close down. The C.W.A., which has recently been employing over four million workers, was definitely meant to be an emergency measure for tiding over the winter months, pending the coming into full operation of the Public Works programme. Civil Works and Public Works are two quite different things—the latter an economic scheme for the execution of directly or indirectly remunerative work on a large scale, the former a means of giving relief pay for unremunerative temporary work instead of unconditionally. The intention has been to wind up the C.W.A. by May, and a million men were to have been turned off at once. This raised such an outcry that they have been retained; but the pay has been reduced all round, and apparently the President is still hoping to close the scheme down at the appointed date. There will be powerful opposition; for, despite the growth of employment both under the Public Works scheme and in normal work, the number of unemployed is still well over ten millions, at a modest estimate. Civil Works are expensive, and there are charges of graft in connection with the distribution of the money. But President Roosevelt will be risking his popularity if he suspends them until there are alternative employments open to the workers affected.

The Unemployment Bill

The Committee stage of the Unemployment Bill has been continued this week, and hot debates on two very important points took place on Monday and Tuesday. The first was the new authority, the Unemployment Assistance Board, which was attacked by the Opposition as a dangerous engine of bureaucracy. For our own part, we think that it is too independent of democratic control, and we regret that the amendment to make its members appointable by Parliament for a term of three years was not carried. But it is surely going rather far to talk of the Board as a Fascist dictatorship, or to suggest, as Mr.

Aneurin Bevan did, that you could never trust to the poor getting decent treatment from a permanent official. Have not he and his friends complained persistently—and rightly too—of the indecent treatment meted out to applicants by the non-official Public Assistance Committees? There is no reason why officials should not deal fairly with the cases that come before them—if the regulations under which they work are fairly framed, and if the spirit of the Central Board and the general policy of the Government are fair. But those, it must be admitted, are big "ifs." Ministers have given small sign as yet of abandoning their zeal for economy at the expense of the poor. And, though there is some hope of concessions in the regulations, the most oppressive feature of the Means Test will remain.

Allowances for Children

On the second point, which was concerned with the needs of dependent children, the Government were hard pressed by a considerable body of Conservatives as well as by Labour and Liberals. It was, indeed, the Tories (coming for the most part from northern and industrial constituencies) who moved that a child's allowance should be a minimum of 3*s*. a week. This was resisted on the ground that, if a specific sum was fixed as a minimum, it would tend to be treated as a maximum —which would defeat the Government's desire that relief should be generous. But if that really is the Government's desire—and if their desire is known to the Unemployment Assistance Board and all local officials, as it presumably would be—why should anyone treat the minimum as a maximum? The Minister of Labour eventually offered to insert words in the Bill to make it clear that the 2*s*. allowance for a child under the Insurance Scheme was not to be regarded as a model for the scale of relief administered by the Board under Part II. But this satisfied few of his opponents, and in the division the Government majority was only fifty-two—the lowest recorded in the present Parliament. The episode is a sign of the growing anxiety, among the less callous section of the well-to-do, about the children of the working class.

Road *v*. Rail in France

In France, the Supreme Economic Council has had under consideration the vexed question of the competition between rival forms of transport, and has just completed a report in which co-ordination between road, rail and coach and river services is strongly urged. In France, as here, the growth of road transport has been making unprofitable a good many branch lines and light railway services which the railway companies are under a statutory obligation to keep at work. It is now proposed that these obligations shall be modified when an assurance of adequate alternative road service can be given, either by the railway company or by a road concern, and that an arrangement should be reached for assigning definite spheres of influence to road and rail transport—and also to airways and waterways—under a system of public licensing of approved services. The idea would be to give the railways and canals a virtual monopoly of long-distance traffic, and also to regulate the growth of road services for shorter hauls. At present, the report has not taken shape in a definite manner; but it indicates that France, despite the much smaller volume of motor traffic on her roads, is also beginning to come seriously up against the "road *v*. rail" problem, especially in rural areas at present served largely by local light railways.

The Forty-hour Week

Sir Allan Smith, in his opening answer to the claim of the engineering Trade Unions for a forty-hour week, was far from encouraging. He admitted the existence of a large surplus of labour and the probability of a high permanent level of unemployment. But he asked whether it was the Trade Union case that the reduction of working hours would be bound to increase the costs of production, and he gave a strong hint that the employers would completely reject the proposal. He even suggested that they would have a counter-claim for an increase, instead of a reduction, in working hours. It is, of course, perfectly true that costs would rise if hours were reduced without a corresponding reduction in weekly wages, and that the British engineering industry would be hampered in competition with foreign producers if the reduction in hours were made on a purely national basis. That is part of the idiocy of existing economic circumstances, which rule out the remedy of spreading the available work by means of a shorter working day. But employers who are willing enough to use the argument have never shown any willingness to join the Trade Unions in pressing for international agreement to reduce working hours simultaneously in all the competing countries. On the contrary, when agreed reduction was proposed at the I.L.O., nearly all the employers' organisations joined forces in opposing it.

The Housing Problem

The returns of housing activity in 1933, published in the current *Ministry of Labour Gazette*, show the great increase in building which has followed the fall in interest rates due to the world depression. In 1930, the estimated cost of dwelling-houses built in 146 leading towns in Great Britain was £46,764,000. In 1931, under the influence of "currency," the total fell to £40,492,000. In 1932 it was back at the level of 1930; and last year it rose to £62,308,000. There was a corresponding increase in other types of building, apart from dwelling-houses. That, Sir Hilton Young will no doubt say, is the Government's case against subsidies for housing. The fall in interest rates, he will urge, gives stimulus enough; and there is no need for special subsidies except for slum-clearance. But this argument totally ignores the character of the houses that are being built. To a relatively small extent are these new houses within the means of the ordinary wage-earners; nor does the process of removal by tenants of old houses to new do much to release accommodation for the poorer tenants in face of the decreased-size of families, which causes the demand for houses to rise much faster than the total population. It is all to the good that low interest rates should have caused so much capital to be applied to housing; but this does not mean we are solving the problem of decent housing for ordinary working-class occupiers.

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FASCISM AND MR. SHAW

The people . . . are sick of twaddle about liberty when they have no liberty.—The Prime Minister in *On the Rocks*, by Bernard Shaw.*

Asked whether he would introduce legislation prohibiting the wearing of political uniforms, the Home Secretary, Sir John Gilmour, replied that the aspect of the problem that had been causing him concern was the provocative effect of wearing such uniforms in the streets and public places and the increasing number of street disorders as a consequence. . . . "The whole question is engaging my serious consideration."—House of Commons, Tuesday, February 20th, 1934.

AN invincible rebel himself, Mr. Shaw has always enjoyed pricking the bubble of liberty. In a capitalist democracy the task was easily within his powers. For liberty, like other great ideas that hold men together, is supported by humbug as well as by argument. Mr. Shaw has no difficulty in showing that the liberty valued by the orthodox supporters of the things that are was mainly the liberty to acquire property and to do what they liked with it; that it meant, in practice, the liberty of modern robber barons, to cheat and exploit the rest of the community Society legislates in response to the demand of a social class, rather than in accordance with any immutable principle of justice. A mere murderer, Mr. Shaw argues, is a much less harmful individual than a man who corners food or burns it in order to keep the price up, but we hang the one and put the other in the House of Lords. This line of argument is reinforced to-day by the glaring facts of capitalist waste—Shaw hit the nail on the head when he said that society was ruled by Breakages, Ltd. Similarly, no one could refute him when he said that, in a plutocracy such as ours, free speech means the right of press barons to exploit ignorance and suppress opinions and facts they dislike. Characteristically, Mr. Shaw neglected to add that he had himself managed to say a great many things in his time that the press barons did not like and that democracy had at least the advantage of enabling small groups of critical or rebellious people to talk to those who cared to listen to them. But, exaggerations apart, his main case that democratic forms are to a large extent a fraud within the structure of a plutocratic economic system is quite unanswerable. Democracy has still to be achieved. In one country after another, we are learning that capitalism allows free institutions to continue only as long as it can control them. To allow people to talk and vote in Parliament provides the best safety-valve as long as Parliament does not do anything that really threatens capitalist interests, which means as long as capitalism produces a surplus which it can afford to distribute in doles and social services. Once it becomes embarrassing to continue this largesse, the voters inevitably begin to demand a suppression of the robber barons and a Socialist order instead of the capitalist anarchy. Whereupon the capitalists finance some demagogue to proclaim the failure of the parliamentary system and, with large promises combined with the threats of hired thugs, to rally the ignorant and the discontented to destroy democracy and re-establish their power in a new form. This new form they have recently taken to calling the Corporate State. What the next stage is nobody knows, but since the essence of successful capitalism is competition, the new system is unlikely to work better if as well as the old, and the demand for Socialism, even if denied open expression, will grow stronger rather than weaker. If this analysis is correct, the outlook for the kind of liberty which the idealists have clamoured for is black.

In the play *On the Rocks* Mr. Shaw paints a picture of the existing political situation: a national Government headed by a Prime Minister attractive and likable, a master of phrases once spell-binding but now void of meaning, eternally busy with no time to think; a Cabinet of party men thinking in terms of general elections, attempting to ignore the surging discontent of the masses who are increasingly contemptuous of Parliament, party politics and "old men"; a head of the police professionally concerned with keeping order by whatever means come to hand; Labour leaders who know that something must be done, but who are frightened of new ideas; Communists whose doctrines are as dogmatically held as they are poorly adapted to existing circumstances. Mr. Shaw makes fun of the lot. When the Prime Minister, after a fortnight's thinking over the works of Karl Marx, returns with a new energy, the policy he launches is a very un-Marxian hotch-potch which, it is suggested, might prove attractive to the multitude if put forward by a leader who was young and energetic and able to combine an armed nationalism with an authoritarian determination to put everything to rights without any nonsense about liberty. No wonder that Mr. Shaw is accused of advertising Fascism. The joke is that when he gets down to thinking seriously about the problem raised in his play, the result is a Preface which completely smashes the Fascist case. The exigencies of drama laid aside, he argues in an essay as brilliant and cogent as anything that he has written that without a complete overthrow of capitalism there can be no real liberty or social stability. He knows well enough that as long as the means of distribution and production remain in private hands there will be restriction of distribution and a devastating social inequality. He knows that the agglomeration of reforms promising everything to everybody, which he allows his Prime Minister to put forward and which are the usual Fascist springes to catch the electoral woodcock, cannot solve the economic problem. And for the first time he seriously argues the problem of liberty, reaching the conclusion that economics must be the business of experts, everybody doing his share of work —he says we must all be "slaves" in our working hours— while leisure should be completely free, and, finally, the right to criticise sacrosanct.

It is a good thing that Mr. Shaw has at length realised his own importance. He has been muddle-headed enough in the past to praise Mussolini's suppression of personal freedom, though it was always obvious enough that if Mr. Shaw had been an Italian he would either have been in exile or in prison. In his delight at exposing the pretensions of the doctrine of liberty as applied to the ownership of capital (which could never in any sane sense be a personal right, since it involves autocratic control over thousands of other people's lives), Mr. Shaw has too often forgotten to put in a caveat on behalf of free speech. In the Preface to *On the Rocks*, he discusses its necessary functions and limitations and illustrates his conclusions by an imaginary dialogue between Christ and Pilate.

**Too True to be Good: Village Wooing: On the Rocks*, by Bernard Shaw (Constable, 7s. 6d.).

He reaches the practical conclusion—not very different from that of Mill, T. H. Green and the other Liberal thinkers—that any State must protect itself against persons and doctrines which are leading to social upheaval, but that it suppresses creative ideas only at the peril of stagnation and death to the society itself. Here theory stops. In the final crisis the outcome must depend on the political wisdom of both sides: the willingness of the old order to give way to new concepts, the wisdom and restraint of the new thinkers in advancing their case. In the great struggles of history which have involved the transference of power from one social class to another, the self-sacrifice and statesmanship required for peaceful adjustment have usually been lacking. The transference of power from a feudal aristocracy to an urban middle-class involved Europe in centuries of intermittent war. In England we managed it with one small war and a couple of bloodless revolutions. The change from the rule of property to some form of Socialist order is an even more difficult one. We are to-day witnessing the fury of the class struggle on the Continent. It may be that the question whether any civilisation is to be left at the end of that struggle depends on our ability in England to overcome the same division of interests without the cruelty and bloodshed that it has involved in Russia, Italy, Germany and Austria.

With these facts in front of us, it should not be beyond the power of those who mind about civilisation more than they mind about the immediate interests of their class to prevent catastrophe in this country. Are there enough of such people? We begin with the advantage that there is not here a strong and implacable Communism. Instead, there is a vast mass of disillusioned and poverty-stricken people who await leadership. It is from this body of unemployed, to whose ranks an increasing number of middle-class unemployed are to-day being added, that Fascism hopes to recruit its mass support. It is to-day organising its appeal with its classic mixture of pseudo-Socialist doctrine and crude force. As in other countries, this Fascism has the support, only thinly hidden since Lord Rothermere came into the field, of financiers and industrialists who are prepared for the duped followers of Fascism to plunge the country into civil war rather than that they should lose their power. They will only succeed if the great body of the middle-classes, which does not understand the issues involved, gives, as it gave in Germany, its tacit support to the movement of violence. That is why the question that was asked on Tuesday in the House of Commons about the suppression of political uniforms is of such immense importance. If middle-class people keep in the back of their minds the feeling that it is really rather pleasant to have a private army ready to come to their help in emergency, that army will grow too big for suppression, and many who are willing to sign manifestoes to-day about the virtues of democracy, will find that it is too late to act. Nor is it any good trying to preserve liberty merely by talking of the virtues of our ancient constitution. If Parliament is not transformed into an efficient organ of government it will disappear; if the unemployed cannot believe in the democratic leaders, they will follow those who are not democratic. The conditions of poverty which millions of people were once prepared to accept as the natural order of things are completely intolerable in a world where wealth is daily destroyed because its distribution does not pay its owners. It is because of the existence of that intolerable paradox of poverty in the midst of plenty that violence may get its chance from the Right or the Left. Therefore, everyone who is anxious to preserve liberty must be prepared, if the majority of the electorate favour Socialism, to accept the transformation of the institutions of private property through Parliament. It is only if the propertied classes are determined to stick to the rules of constitutional democracy, to suppress all private armies, and to accept social changes peacefully introduced, but prejudicial to their interests as a class, that we can hope to avoid the horrors of naked class warfare. If they are not prepared for the statesmanship and self-sacrifice involved in those conditions, their protestations that they love liberty and hate the violence and dictatorship of Fascism are so much hypocrisy. The immediate test of the sincerity of our ruling class is provided by the question of private armies. We have seen the results of permitting them to grow in Germany and Austria. Do our rulers intend to rely on a democratic solution, or do they secretly like to see Fascism growing? We shall soon know.

AUSTRIA—WHOSE REVOLT?

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT IN VIENNA]

"GOD grant that the feuds among our people and its leaders will be healed quickly before we stand weeping over graves." These fateful words, spoken only three days before the outbreak of civil war in Austria by the veteran leader of the Clerical (Christian Social) Party, Herr Kunschak, in the last session ever held in the Vienna Diet, are not without significance in considering the question whether Socialists or Fascists were the aggressors in that conflict. Kunschak, on the eve of the conflict which he knew was approaching, found the courage to stretch out a hand to the Socialists from whom, as he said, "otherwise we are separated by a world of differences. To-day we will vote shoulder to shoulder with them at a grave moment for the sake of Vienna." He spoke and voted in connection with a financial Bill, but everyone knew what such a gesture at such a tense moment meant. If there was any doubt that it was made in an endeavour to restrain Dr. Dollfuss from his determination to destroy the Social Democratic Party as the Heimwehr had demanded (thus producing inevitably the general strike and final stand which the Socialist Party Congress in October had warned the Government would follow), it was removed by the Bürgermeister himself. "A city like our Vienna cannot afford a policy of violence," said Herr Seitz. "It is the idea of a lunatic that we should settle our differences, however deep, by violence. I am happy to have heard in the Vienna Diet such words from men in such prominent positions. They accord well with the kindly spirit of our city." Three days later the spirit of Vienna had become that of Major Fey and his Heimwehr, and Mayor Seitz, an international figure as well as perhaps the most popular individual in Vienna, was sitting in a Heimwehr prison.

The Clerical Party's Chancellor was not so concerned as his representative in the Vienna Diet that feuds should be healed before Vienna had to mourn at gravesides, and he answered Kunschak the next day in words which showed little of Herr Seitz's "kindly spirit." "We neither can nor will have anything to do with the obstinate adherents of Marxist-Bolshevik ideology. Politicians who speak in a different sense are quite out of touch with my ideas." He backed up implacable words the same day by depriving Seitz of a series of his constitutional rights. On the following day, attending field and musketry exercises (illegal of course, under the

Treaty of St. Germain) by the mobilised Vienna Heimwehr, Major Fey, referring to the discussions of the preceding two days when the Heimwehr had presented to Dr. Dollfuss demands the fulfilment of which all Austria knew would mean a general strike and civil war, said: "I can reassure you. We know now that the Chancellor, Dr. Dollfuss, is one of us. I can tell you more. To-morrow we start the job and we are going to make a clean job of it." The following morning the workers' club in Linz was searched for arms; the workers resisted and by night artillery was shooting in Vienna.

On January 31st, putting forward some fantastic story that the Tyrolese Nazis were about to blow up buildings and murder Heimwehr leaders, 8,000 men of the Tyrolese Heimwehr were mobilised under arms. On February 2nd, Dr. Steidle, leader of the Tyrolese Heimwehr, declared that this was a "rebellion in favour of the Government." On February 5th, Prince Starhemberg said, in a passage which the papers were forbidden to print, that the Chancellor could do nothing without the support of the Heimwehr. If Dollfuss delayed fulfilment of the Heimwehr demands (which were for the dissolution of the constitutional governing bodies in the Provinces, the placing of power in the hands of a Heimwehr Committee and the dissolution of the Social Democratic and other political parties), he would be unable to keep the Heimwehr loyal to Dollfuss. The *Weltblatt*, a clerical newspaper which recently has strongly supported the Heimwehr demand, reprinted an article in its issue of February 9th, referring to the Heimwehr action as "the Austrian revolution," and saying that like all other revolutions it needed exceptional measures. The Tyrolese Heimwehr action was followed by similar revolutionary armed mobilisations in the other provinces and concentrations in the capitals (Linz was one of them) where similar demands were presented, always including the one which the Socialists had announced in October they would resist by a general strike—the destruction of their own party. All these illegally armed Heimwehr remained under arms, refusing to demobilise until their demands were granted.

It would be impossible to detail all the unconstitutional actions of the Dollfuss-Fey Cabinet since they shut up the Parliament last March. It was the "Hausjude" of the Ministry of War, Herr Hecht, whose researches into dusty folios brought to light a wartime measure passed under the rule of the Emperor Charles of Austria-Hungary, ruler over the long-dead monarchy of fifty-three million inhabitants, authorising the Government of His Imperial and Apostolic Majesty to issue in wartime emergency certain economic decrees for which it would have been dangerous to wait on parliamentary approval. By virtue of this musty document the Government proceeded to destroy the Republic. The Austrian Fascist counter-revolution was not made last week by Starhemberg, Fey or Dollfuss, but by one of those intelligent talmudistic Jewish experts in twisting words and paragraphs, who in the past so often helped Austria out of the muddles created by the picturesque figure-heads in whose offices they worked. The shocking story of the past week is that of the final consolidation of a counter-revolution by force of arms. The cause of democracy and Socialism was lost last March.

Major Fey, on whose shoulders rests the principal responsibility for the action of the Government during the past week, is making unheard of exertions to persuade the foreign press (in which, apart from the Italian and Hungarian papers, condemnation of the ruthlessness of Austrian Fascism is practically universal) that the Social Democrats were never democrats in anything but name, and had been preparing for years a bloody Communist uprising in order to establish the dictatorship of the proletariat. If he is right, they must have been the most block-headed revolutionaries the world has ever seen. Everyone knows now that they never lacked arms, and it is certain—indeed the Government has allowed its tame press to say so—that they have had most of these arms ever since the war. Dr. Deutsch, the commander of the Republican Defence Corps, has reminded the world that at the time of the Vienna disorders of 1927, when an excited mob burned down the Palace of Justice, not one military weapon of the many thousands at their command was issued to the Republican Defence Corps. There are photographs on record showing that Bürgermeister Seitz and other Socialist leaders at the risk of their own lives went out into the midst of the angry mob to calm them. Ninety-five men and women were killed by police bullets on that occasion and only five police—figures which speak for themselves. Why did not these bloodthirsty revolutionaries seize their opportunity, when the Heimwehr were in their infancy, the army largely Socialist, democracy unchallenged in Europe, and the Clerical Party comparatively weak? Why did not they create other opportunities to strike before their power had been impaired by their enemies and by outward circumstances beyond the control of either? Why did they not meet the silent counter-revolution of Dollfuss last March, when Parliament was suppressed, by a rising? The world will find the answer, if Major Fey cannot. It is that the Austrian Social Democratic Party has established by its whole history its right to the description of democratic and pacific. With ample arms at its disposal it never used them but in a last attempt to save by force of arms the party and the democratic system which was to have been extinguished the following week. Did Major Fey give Mayor Seitz and the other Socialist leaders he arrested a chance once again to try to calm their followers? Or did he refuse them such a chance? Public opinion will demand an answer.

What is the Socialist Party's record during the long months of violations of the Republican Constitution, of incessant provocations to the workers and challenges to their leaders since last March? Dr. Otto Bauer, the political genius of the party, has given in interviews a list of concrete efforts made by the Socialists to come to an agreement with Dr. Dollfuss which would have enabled a united democratic front to be formed to combat the Nazi terror. He declares categorically that every attempt—even that of a conditional offer to give Dollfuss the power to govern for two years without parliament—was shattered on the determination of Dollfuss (a determination which he very cleverly concealed from the outside world, thus securing the support of Great Britain, France and other democratic countries which would otherwise have been denied him) to establish autocratic rule in Austria and destroy the democratic Republic. Major Fey frankly admits that if he had known of any such peace offers, including that which the Socialists say they made when the general strike broke out, he would have thrown his whole weight against their acceptance and in favour of forcing a conflict with the Socialists. The world knows where it is with Major Fey at least.

Dr. Dollfuss made a vague appeal to Austrian workers on January 31st, which was capable of various interpretations. Probably it was only window dressing. The Party Council of the Social Democrats unanimously adopted a resolution on January 28th, declaring its readiness to co-operate in creating a new constitution by constitutional means provided that the right of combination for the workers was maintained. It repeated the declarations of willingness to co-operate in finding a peaceful solution in the resolutions of October 16th and December 3rd. The resolution underlined the eagerness of the workers to co-operate against the Nazis. The answer in the *Reichspost* was, "that the council could take it upon itself to issue this reply shows that it has learned nothing."

Surely no reactionaries ever had a harder task in provoking a conflict with the Left than Dollfuss and Fey. But they had inscribed on their banners "Socialism *delenda est*." There are gaping holes in walls and roofs of the finest examples of what can be done to give the workers homes filled with fresh air and sunlight in an atmosphere of cleanliness and order, green trees and lawns, that the world has seen. Sports and cultural institutions which taught the worker to care for and take pride in his own body and his own brain after he had ended his labours have been destroyed overnight. The spoils of victory are rich and terror is being employed to retain them. Probably one-third of the wealth of Austria was being administered—and splendidly administered—by the Socialist

Municipality of Vienna. Everything is confiscated by the victors, who have filled the prisons with Socialists and the streets with unemployed. But worse than the material loss in the eyes of all progressives will be the spiritual destruction. Those who brought enlightenment and self-respect to the post-war workers in Austria are dismissed—most of them imprisoned.

An obscurantist Church breathes again at the prospect of the resurrection of the power of superstition. So do the capitalist and the aristocrat, freed from the spectacle of men and women who could sell their labour as part of a bargain between equals instead of standing obsequiously to receive what the lord might see fit to give to his lackeys. Yet even at their Belshazzar's feast they seem to see the hand of the embittered worker, conscious of only one desire, revenge, drawing upon the wall. And what he is drawing is a Swastika.

CO-OPS. AND OTHER SHOPS

THE success of the mass-producer of branded articles was developed, until a few years ago, in an environment of general inefficiency and backwardness on the part of the retail system. Hundreds of thousands of small "independent" grocers, confectioners, ironmongers, chemists and drapers with no resources, no buying power, and little skill, could put up no sort of resistance to the advance of the powerful national manufacturer; they speedily became his puppets—mere channels for his goods and his propaganda. But he, in turn, had to pay them simply for being where the ultimate consumer could get at them. Because of their inefficiency he had to pay them highly—that is, highly in relation to his own costs and to retail prices. So the way was left wide open for the enormously profitable rise of efficient large-scale retailing as practised by the chains, and for the 80 per cent. increase in Co-op. membership since the war.

At present, there are about half a million retail shops in Britain; perhaps not more than 10 per cent. of them are multiple shops, chain stores, and Co-operative branches, but that 10 per cent. does nearly half the retail trade of the country. The rest is done by the 450,000 independent shops, five-sixths of which are so small as to have no employees other than the members of the family. Obviously the position of these small outlets is a very uncertain one. They have in their favour three things. Many of them can continue on a basis that is in the accountancy sense unprofitable, because the family treats them simply as an extra source of gross revenue, to supplement the wages that one or two of its members may earn; again, they are "just round the corner" and enjoy an inevitable casual trade; while, thirdly, for this very reason many manufacturers deliberately try to preserve them in being by keeping retail discounts large, fearful of the effect on their own turnover if there were fewer of the opportunities of purchase and of advertisement which these small shops represent. On the other hand, they are outmatched in buying, selling, and display, in quality of site and in personnel, in size and range of stock, and rapidity of turnover. They are thus an economic anachronism, but, as the Nazis knew and as Lord Beaverbrook is evidently disposed to believe, they may become a social portent. What is not clear, at least not on the economic merits of the case, is why the latest crusade is restricted to one—and not necessarily the most formidable—of the small shop's three competitors. For the Co-ops., though they have a steadily growing membership that now reaches nearly seven millions, and do about a sixth of the retail trade of the country, have in recent years shown a falling turnover, while a very large part of their immense membership (especially, it would seem, the better-off section) does much of its shopping with private traders. The average sales per member are less than £30 per annum, and have been tending to fall. It is worth noting that the Co-ops. do not set out to offer price-competition in the direct sense. They sell at full prices, and even in some areas above them. Their appeal is twofold—the attractiveness of the idea of co-operation, and the inducement of the "divi.," which averages between 1*s*. 9*d*. and 2*s*. in the pound. This does not wholly represent the fruit of rational retailing, since the Co-ops. are not conspicuously well managed, and the independence of the retail societies, many of which are very small, prevents the realisation of the full benefits of large-scale operation. The "divi." is, in part, the effect of the elimination of private profit and of share interest beyond 5 per cent. on the capital; in part, it represents a nest-egg deliberately set aside by member-shoppers who could often drive better individual bargains elsewhere. Multiple shops, on the other hand, win and hold their growing trade—now between a fifth and a sixth of the nation's total—by the value they can offer through the economies of mass buying, highly skilled central management, and various marginal advantages that spring from large resources; and they are able to yield in most instances a very substantial return on invested capital. The average small retailer will tell you that he regards them, with the fixed price chains, as the real menace to his future. Whether or not he is right, there are certainly considerable sections of distribution where they are very strongly entrenched. Boots are said to handle a sixth of the chemists' trade of the country. There are 400 grocery chains with over 10,000 branches between them, all in picked sites. The dominance of the tailoring and footwear chains is becoming more and more obvious. The multiple shop is so obviously a leading element in the distributive system as to make it unlikely that the majority of small retailers will confuse business and politics sufficiently to feel reassured by any crusade in which private chains are not even mentioned.

The attack on the Co-ops. is now being represented, however, not merely as a defence of the small private trader, but as a move to protect the interests of national manufacturers of branded goods. Lord Beaverbrook is known to have written personally to many leading manufacturers asking for their support, because the Co-ops., instead of featuring branded articles, "prefer to push similar products made in their own factories or sold under their own trade marks." There must be few recipients of this innocent missive who do not know that the sharpest and most troublesome instances of the inevitable clash of interest between the big manufacturer and the big retailer occur not in the Co-ops., but in the multiples, the great fixed-price chains, and in some of the big metropolitan department stores. There are multiples which manufacture and brand their own goods and deliberately display them side by side with higher-priced competitive goods bearing the brand of a national manufacturer. There are departments in some of the large stores where national brands are systematically buried among unbranded or store-branded merchandise on which a larger profit is made, or which carries the store's own goodwill rather than that of a manufacturer. The fixed-price chains do not manufacture, but their enormous buying power enables them to specify and buy lines carrying brands of their own, saleable at prices below those of the nationally branded and advertised articles with which they are intended to compete, and with which they may or may not compare in intrinsic quality. So serious is this menace of mass-buying* that some national manufacturers feel themselves forced to take out an insurance policy by tendering for chain-store contracts with unbranded merchandise at cut prices. These cut prices mean that the unbranded goods are treated as being free from normal selling costs, including advertising. In other words, there is at the present time an increasingly acute and increasingly self-conscious conflict between mass-producers and mass-retailers. The maker's main weapon is the national goodwill which advertising has built for his brands; the seller's is in many instances price, and a store-goodwill not based upon advertising. The manufacturer will fight hard to maintain the goodwill of his brands, and the measure of security and market control which that goodwill brings. The

* It has very recently been reported that the Canadian Government is about to institute an inquiry into mass-buying by chains—whether upon the representations of independent retailers, or manufacturers, or both, is not stated.

mass-retailer is interested in no goodwill but his own ; he will, if he can, force the manufacturer to cut his selling costs and sacrifice advertising goodwill in order to compete for the retailer's huge orders in a purely price market. Such a policy is part of the inherent logic of contemporary large-scale retailing. This being so, why single out the Co-ops., who are by no means the worst offenders either from the manufacturer's point of view or from that of a newspaper dependent on brand advertising ? Hitherto, the retail Co-ops. have jealously preserved a great measure of practical independence of the Co-operative Wholesale Society, which manufactures and buys centrally—and is perennially a little hurt that the retail societies buy half their supplies from private producers. Many a national manufacturer finds the Co-ops. a more amenable customer and a less-awkward competitor than Woolworth's. The C.W.S. may—who knows ?—dream of making, or at least branding, everything it sells ; doubtless some private chains cherish similar hopes. In either case, realisation would mean a sea change, if not actual disaster, for many a national manufacturer. Which dream is realised matters much to doctrinaires, but either might be a sad blow to the business end of Fleet Street. What is the next stone that will issue from the *Daily Express's* glasshouse ? Is this anti-Co-op. crusade a manoeuvre whose full implications were not seen at the outset by the crusaders, or is it the intentional precursor to an attack on chains and multiples in the joint names of seventeenth-century retailing and twentieth-century mass-production ?

S. C. L.

TOP HATS

THE civilised world has always taken clothes pretty seriously. This is only natural as we have to spend a great part of our lives putting clothes on and taking them off again. This is our doom, and there is no escape from it except by way of nudism. If one could get back all the quarter-hours and half-hours one has spent in dressing and undressing, and join them together, one would find oneself with enough time on one's hands to write an eight-and-sixpenny novel.

It is an extremely monotonous business, and it speaks well for the human race that the richer members of it, free from the compulsion to work, do not retire to their beds and spend their lives there rather than go on with this perpetual donning and doffing of their pseudo-skins. Possibly, they would have done so if they had not learned to mitigate the monotony by constant changes of fashion. These changes of fashion were obviously the invention of the rich, and even to-day it is noticeable that, the richer you are, the more often you get out of one costume into another.

This brings an element of variety into dress, and where there is variety there is interest. The ups and downs of stocks and shares scarcely excite the human imagination more than the fluctuations of fashion. Every new spring with its new designs of dress is looked forward to as eagerly as if it were Utopia. The Promised Land is for many people a land of the latest frocks. The daffodil and the swallow return each year in due season, but last year's dresses do not return. Here we see an example of perpetual progress—which means running round and round in an enormous circle.

Of the two sexes, it was the male that first began to doubt whether it was consonant with the dignity of immortal spirits to fritter away so much time and thought in pursuit of the latest costume. The man's imagination recoiled from the necessity of perpetually wondering what it would best become him to wear on the various sections of his body, from the top of his head to the tips of his toes. He realised that there was something in life to be thought of besides dressing up, and he set out to devise a costume that might not be ideal but that would continue with only slight changes from season to season, and so would spare him from having to think about clothes even when he was ordering a new suit. Even in the costume that he wears amid the gaiety of parties he demands a more or less unchanging pattern—a uniform distinguishing one year from another and one man from another almost as little as the uniform of a London policeman distinguishes one policeman from another.

His liberty from worries about clothes, however, has not been maintained without a struggle. Eternal vigilance is the price of liberty, and man has to be eternally on watch against tailors and other unscrupulous propagandists of innovation in order to be able to go on wearing the clothes he has learned to like. The innovators, it is true, are not very courageous. They know they dare not model themselves on the women's dressmakers, ordering man one year to wear trousers that do not reach to his knees and the next year to wear trousers that he will have to hold up with his hands to prevent the bottoms trailing in the mud. Not even the most revolutionary tailor has come forward with a proposal for a new pattern of masculine evening dress which would expose the wearer's chest and the backbone down to the waist.

The innovators content themselves with trying to undermine the stability of fashion by suggesting trifling changes. They are believers in the thin end of the wedge. Hence, they tell us one year that we must wear spats, and another year that we must not. They rejoice as in a triumph of reform when they have forced us to wear the bottoms of our trousers turned up and sewed in that position so that we cannot turn them down. They vary the shape of evening-dress ties and evening-dress waistcoats. They put a line of braid down the sides of our dress trousers or take it away as the whim seizes them. They change the height of our collars, and give them wings, or remove the wings at will. They tell us whether we must dress by day in linen shirts or shirts of less worthy material. They put our handkerchief pocket sometimes outside and sometimes inside the jacket. They instruct us whether to wear boots or shoes.

With all these changes, however, masculine dress is a sphere in which we have so far been spared the horrors of revolution. Within my own lifetime the dress of women has changed so violently that the women of one generation scarcely seemed to belong to the same species as the women of the next. The changes in men's dress have been trivial in comparison. I myself dress largely as I dressed in my teens. No longer do I wear a starched shirt by day. I wear a soft collar instead of a linen one that reached nearly to my ears. I wear shoes instead of boots, and a soft hat instead of a cap. But the jacket, waistcoat and trousers that I wear to-day are still of much the same pattern as those I wore in the 'nineties. Trousers have varied in width, making me look like a spindle-shanks one year or giving me the legs of a sailor another ; but they have never ceased to be cloth tubes covering me from waist to ankle in the same old way.

The most revolutionary things that have happened to masculine dress during the period, indeed, have been the disappearance of the frock-coat and the decline in popularity of the top hat.

Whether these changes are always for the better I am not certain. I see that a Top Hat Club has been formed at Westminster to celebrate the centenary of the top hat by reviving the fashion for wearing it. I myself do not like wearing a top hat, but I like to see other people wearing top hats. A top hat shining in the June sun is a very beautiful spectacle, suggesting a world of peace, progress and prosperity in full swing. It is the crown of the successful man. It is true that in its great days it was worn by many men who were much less successful than they looked ; but none the less it was essentially the badge of a nineteenth-century society that was conscious of having achieved a stable civilisation at last—a moneyed Paradise on which the sun shone. No wonder that those who wore it loved it, so that members kept it on their heads all day in the House of Commons. Lord Hamilton of Dalzell, in a letter to the *Times*, recalls how, forty years ago, most of the members of the Guards Club also wore their top hats indoors in the club and many even did so at luncheon. This passionate attachment to hats, he suggests,

may have been due to the feeling that, if a hat was to preserve its dazzling shine, it was more likely to do so on the head than anywhere else. I doubt the explanation, however. It seems to me that the natural man loves to wear a hat. I have seen an old peasant sitting with a hat on his head as he sat by his own fireside. If it had been so glorious a thing as a top hat, instead of the faded wreck it was, I am sure he would not only have worn it at the fireside but have gone to bed in it.

There is this to be said for a revival of the custom of wearing top hats, that it is at least the mark of a peace-loving civilisation. Top hats are a charm against violence. Gay young men about town have occasionally been tempted to bash them in hours of elation, but the bashing even of a single top hat increases good humour, and none of the really serious riots was ever the work of top-hatted mobs. It is impossible for the ordinary man to feel violent in a top hat. He is thinking too much about his hat to risk it in a brawl. I cannot help feeling that if the various revolutionary movements of recent years had gone in for top hats instead of coloured shirts, we should have had a much more peaceful world. Unfortunately, almost as soon as a man becomes a revolutionary he invariably begins to hate top hats. When you see a revolutionary wearing a top hat you feel pretty sure that the revolution is over.

Hence, I believe that, if the wearing of top hats could be made universal, the outlook for peace would be a great deal brighter. A top hat had to be lived up to, and we should be as loath to disgrace it as a Boy Scout to disgrace his uniform. Unfortunately, modern conditions are against it. You cannot put a top hat under a seat in the cinema without ruffling its sheen. If the crowd at the Cup Final at Wembley wore tall hats, either the majority would keep them on their heads and cause a riot by obstructing the view of those behind them or they would keep them on their knees and find them battered out of recognition by the end of the game.

The age of the top hat, indeed, I am afraid, is almost over. It is fading before our eyes. We shall be henceforth a soft-hatted world. May our heads be less soft than our hats!

Y. Y.

A LONDON DIARY

I HAVE watched with great interest the reactions of the English press to the events in Austria. Though the word "rebels" has been freely used, it has been generally recognised that a constitutional Social Democratic Party had been driven to a desperate resistance by a Fascist attack. (A friend of mine who has known Major Fey for many years tells me that he has heard him express the desire to kill every Socialist in Austria.) Even the *Morning Post* pointed out that the Austrian Marxists were not Communists and that they had not courted or initiated violence. The best article I have seen in any daily paper on the subject was by G. E. R. Gedye, the Vienna correspondent of the *Daily Telegraph*. In his article on February 15th he pointed out that in Vienna there were "no Communists worth mention." Oddly enough, on the *Daily Telegraph's* picture page of the same day the caption that accompanied a photograph of the fighting called the Social Democrats "Communists"! The article that really shocked me was from a special correspondent in the *Observer* where one expects a high standard. It shamelessly described "the worst uprising which Austria had ever experienced" quelled by the forces of "order." The *Times* has fallen over itself with caution about the whole affair, but I met one reader in a blazing rage at the revelation of its correspondent that while men, women and children were being shelled in the magnificent Karl Marx and Goethe buildings, the firing had been stopped in some quarters "partly to avoid the destruction of valuable industrial property."

* * *

If the Hops Amendment Scheme is put into force in anything like its present form, we shall have an instructive and entertaining object lesson in monopolistic exploitation. The Hops Board set up under the Marketing Act has already done very well for its clients, the hop-growers. Hops can be grown at a profit if they are sold at £8 or £8 10s. a cwt. In the current season they are fetching about £15 a cwt., and yielding nearly 100 per cent. profit to the growers. The normal result would, of course, be a considerable increase in the acreage under hops. This the Amending Scheme prohibits, preserving for the present growers a virtual monopoly. Now it so happens that, under a monopoly, hops conform to the ideal conditions for exploitation, that is to say, it will be possible by restricting the supply to obtain an enormously increased price. There is no obvious substitute for hops in the manufacture of beer, and their cost is an extremely small item in the total cost of beer. It may be open to the brewers to decrease the proportion of hops to malt, but since this would lead to criticism of the quality of the beer, they will probably pay a considerable ransom to hop-growers before resorting to this device. We may thus see the present ring of hop-growers, who number a little over one thousand, making large fortunes, while the landowners secure an enormous unearned increment from the land which happens to be under hops.

* * *

The immediate losers will be the brewers. Few of us will shed tears over their losses, but it is obvious that these will be passed on, either in increased price or in diminished quality, to the consumers. Another injured party is the farmer who was squeezed out of hop-growing during the lean years, and is now to be prevented by his more opulent neighbours from renewing the crop and thus recouping himself for past losses. But from the point of view of the public interest, the greatest danger is that this very special case of hops will be taken as a precedent, and that the milk and potato producers will clamour for similar opportunities to exploit the consumer.

* * *

I gather that the Beaverbrook attack on the Co-ops. has been a "flop" from every point of view and that it is likely to be dropped very shortly. The House of Commons' support has been meagre, the Co-ops. have gained an immediate increase in turnover, membership and funds, and the manufacturers to whom Lord Beaverbrook has written for support have mostly turned him down. I have in front of me one of the letters that have been circulated from the *Daily Express* office. Its object is apparently to persuade manufacturers of branded articles to join in the campaign against the Co-ops. on the ground that "the Co-operative movement is antagonistic both to the small trader and the independent manufacturer." It expresses complete disinterestedness, though I do not suppose the *Express* would complain if the result of the letter were the transference of advertisements of some branded goods from what the circular describes as "journals with a Co-operative bias." In some instances I know of manufacturers have replied to letters of this kind pointing out that the Co-ops. are excellent customers who pay their bills promptly and that they have no intention of quarrelling with them. The best of the joke is that some of the manufacturers of branded goods are their own competitors! They make a branded article for those customers who like the idea that they are buying guaranteed "quality" goods and they also produce an unbranded article, which may really be exactly the same article without the label at a cut price to cater for the public which prefers to buy in the cheapest market.

* * *

A correspondent in Paris who witnessed the inauguration of the new French Government, writes: "When the Government of M. Doumergue, the 'Government of National Salvation,' came before a humble and respectful Chamber of Deputies last Thursday, the Communists were the only people who refused to be in the least impressed by the solemnity of the occasion. They shouted and booed this Cincinnatus as though he were just another Radical Prime Minister. In fact, they completely spoiled what would otherwise have been a most impressive ceremony. The papers of the Right were

most annoyed, and complained bitterly of the hooliganism of the Communists. 'The noise these fellows managed to make,' one paper wrote, 'was something awful. It may sound incredible, but when a Communist starts yelling *he can make more noise than a thousand silent people.*'"

* * *

It was odd to read in one of the largest-sale Sunday papers a quite individual and unique account of how King Albert was killed in a motor smash. The headline ran, "killed in car-smash, official." It said that the King was driving himself and it described the hair-pin bend at which the accident occurred and how the car overturned, killing both the King and the chauffeur. I shall be interested to see if this Sunday paper tells us next week the source of this unique account of events which do not seem to have taken place.

* * *

I take the following remark from a speech by Representative Butten, Chairman of the Naval Committee, as reported in the *New York Times*:

> Frequently you will find an American diplomat wearing a monocle and yellow neckties and blue spats and pink shirts. He does everything in his power to look and act and talk like a Britisher.

CRITIC

THIS ENGLAND

Readers are invited to send us cuttings suitable for inclusion in this column. Address: 10 Great Queen Street, Kingsway, London, W.C.2.

Many voters with no very pronounced political convictions will support Sir Roger [Keyes] . . . Until he was adopted a fortnight ago he had attended only two political meetings in his life, and one of these was a Socialist meeting. He does not pretend to be a politician, and he has the blunt, outspoken honesty of the sailor.—*Observer.*

Outdoor occupation for girl.—Opportunity to live in psycho-therapist's seaside home; large kennels.—Advert. in *Times.*

Private owner wishes to dispose of old furniture of all kinds, nearly new.—Advert. in *Times.*

The new lashes are now sold in the shops, and since they are so natural and easy to adjust we can, for a few shillings, all satisfy that innate desire for dark curly lashes.

They are packed in small boxes with tweezers and the invisible adhesive for applying them, and have been proved to stand firm after hot or cold bathing.—*Evening Standard.*

On the other hand, much good might result if the exhibition would popularise the use of leather from such poisonous snakes as cobras and Russell's vipers. It is usually dangerous to interfere with the balance of nature in any way, but as these snakes are responsible for many thousands of deaths annually in India they probably do more harm than good.—Burgess Barnett, Curator of Reptiles, London Zoological Society, in a letter to the *Times.*

Therefore, I strongly commend the Ukrainian movement to all intelligent politicians, or, for the matter of that, to manufacturers of war material, who are interested in protecting Western European civilisation in a practical war, as being more important than the purely theoretical peace of the world, which some people stupidly believe to be possible.—*The Aeroplane.*

The very old Amontillado cleansed tongue and palate with the impetuous certainty of a mighty wind.—H. Warner Allen in *The Wines of France.*

At a ceremony presided over by Sir Thomas Holland at Burlington House, London, yesterday, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald was elected a member of the London Geological Society.

"To-day I am returning to an old love," he said. "I started my interest in life on the rocks upon which I was born, the Elgin sandstone, and this may be taken perhaps as my first step towards a return to my youth. I have been wandering far in other unknown and, in some respects, unexplored lands since then."—*Edinburgh Evening News.*

HAROLD WRIGHT

[Harold Wright, who died suddenly on February 20th, assisted Mr. H. D. Henderson, editor of the *Nation and Athenaeum*, up to 1930, when he succeeded him as editor. He joined the board of directors of the NEW STATESMAN AND NATION in 1931.]

FEW men can have ever lived who possessed in a more conspicuous degree than Harold Wright the too commonly attributed quality of a "genius for friendship." He had all the essential virtues of a friend, fidelity, loyalty, generosity, appreciativeness, sympathy and a readiness to take endless trouble, as well as the attractions of a good companion. But he had also in a quite peculiar degree the gift of entering, without effort or affectation, both in light matters and in grave, into the problems and fortunes of others, as though they were his own. Singularly devoid of egotism and personal ambition, he had a high sense of the capacities and deserts of his friends, and any success which fell to them gave him a pleasure which was unalloyed by the smallest admixture of envy, which was touched rather by something akin to paternal pride. Friendship, indeed, was the fibre of his being, and there must be many in the most diverse walks of life to whom the news of his sudden death this week will have come with a stunning sense of the loss of something unique in their lives.

He was a natural editor. He took a real pleasure in every aspect of an editor's task. The selection of subjects and features, the enlisting of a band of contributors, the persuasive approach to the eminent and the busy, the discovery and encouragement of new talent were all thoroughly congenial to him; while the sudden emergencies which continually arise in the publication of a periodical gave scope for the imperturbable resourcefulness which was one of his outstanding qualities. In one sphere or another, he was editing most of his life—the *Granta* in his undergraduate days at Cambridge, *War and Peace*, the *Letters of Stephen Reynolds*, the *Nation and Athenaeum*. But perhaps the most striking instance of his editorial quality was supplied by the volume of *Cambridge University Studies* which appeared last year. Superficially, he might have seemed ill-qualified for the task of editing a series of essays designed to give an account of academic work in Cambridge. Yet the result was a volume of real value and distinction, which I am sure no other editor could have bettered. For, as he explained in his introduction—

> The task of editing (he wrote) has not been easy. First of all the contributors had to be persuaded that the book was required; then that it was their duty to write it. Then there were endless delays. One contributor broke his arm; another had his appendix removed; a third completed his essay, but was so dissatisfied with it that he wanted to tear it up. The great majority showed far greater respect for academic integrity and a high standard of scholarship than for the sanctity of a time-contract.

Such difficulties were inevitable, and those who knew Harold Wright will appreciate how supremely well-fitted he was with his persuasive optimism, his patient persistence, his encouraging sympathy, his sweet and yet decisive temper, for the task of overcoming them.

Harold Wright's outlook on public affairs was dominated by a passionate hatred of war, violence, bullying and bombast. The cause into which he threw himself most actively was the Norman Angell movement before the war. He became alienated from any movement which seemed to play with the idea of violence, and he profoundly distrusted any public man who indulged frequently in truculent language. At Cambridge, to which he came several years older than the average undergraduate as the result of illness (his whole life was a triumph of courage over ill-health), he exercised a remarkable influence on the thought of his contemporaries. He loved discussion, and was the most delightful of disputants; on every subject he was ready with a decided opinion which usually represented a blend of a moral idea, right feeling, and intellectual audacity. With this habit of thought it is needless to say that he found much to disconcert him in the development of the post-war world.

H. D. HENDERSON

"WHEN THE TIME IS RIPE"

To the wild-eyed fanatics, the dreamers of dreams,
All times come alike for promoting their schemes.
With the blindness of age, the impatience of youth,
They admit no close season for logic and truth;
And through good or ill fortune, in shadow or sun,
They must hammer away until something is done.

But the practical, hard-headed realist climbs
Into power by observing the signs of the times;
And when housing, and commerce, and peace are his cares,
He has still one eye fixed on the tide of affairs;
With his head full of schemes that may brighten our lives
In the ripeness of time—if it ever arrives.

If war should draw nearer, it seems we must cease,
As grotesquely ill-timed, our endeavours for peace;
Nor while tariffs and quotas are strangling our trade
Can a premature move towards freedom be made;
For all practical statesmen have always contended
That till matters shall mend, they can never be mended.

Per contra, with luck and the turn of the tide,
Unemployment and housing may stand on one side;
Since emergency measures can only proceed
From a crisis produced by exceptional need. . . .
To get *anything* done, we must turn, as it seems,
To the wild-eyed fanatics, the dreamers of dreams.

MACFLECKNOE

Correspondence

HELP FOR THE AUSTRIAN WORKERS

SIR,—There is a debt to be paid which admits of no delay—the debt which every liberally minded person, every democrat—and, of course, every Socialist—throughout the world owes to the appalling number, running into hundreds of thousands already, of the victims of Austrian Fascism.

They owe this debt not merely because these victims, one and all, played their parts in gallantly upholding during ten years and more the principles of liberty and light against the steadily increasing pressure of the forces of Fascist tyranny and darkness. The debt is far more pressing and personal than that. Lovers of liberty owe it because it is they—let me say it is "us"—who must bear a share (perhaps the greatest share) of responsibility for bringing into being again that Austria whose name up till fifty years ago was synonymous with cold-blooded tyranny and repression.

Every year I visit Vienna and the Tyrol, sing the praises of Vienna's easy-going, inefficient charm, of the beauty of Tyrol's lakes and mountains. With thousands of others, I have helped in my letters home to create a sentimental picture of a sun-loving, free and happy folk. While we sentimentalised, forces have been maturing which have blotted out that picture entirely. The responsibility of Anglo-Saxon lovers of liberty is even more positive than this. Failing to recognise what was afoot, we have furnished Dr. Dollfuss with the power which he never would have had otherwise to destroy liberty in Austria. We have depicted him as the heroic champion of Austrian liberty against German bullying, we have given him moral, financial and even military support (it was the Entente Powers which, a few months ago, consented to the arming and regularising of 20,000 Heimwehr Fascists to "protect Austria against the Nazis," whom the German-born Major Fey really needed to carry out the bloody task of the past week).

We cannot share the sufferings of those whose warnings we let pass unheeded—the Austrian Socialists. We *must* do our share to relieve them. Pressure is being brought to bear on Austrians by the familiar collecting methods of the Nazis to contribute to funds to reward those who fought, or the relatives of those who were killed. There is no word of help for the countless victims among the workers, for the relatives of the thousand persons killed by the Fascist coup—for that is what it was in reality—despite the plunder, on which they have had their eyes for years (the enormous wealth built up in Vienna by fifteen years of model Socialist government), which has fallen into the hands of the victors.

Every day thousands are being flung on to the streets to starve—women as well as men—because they faithfully serve their ideals, merely because they faithfully served their Socialist employers. The civilised world must act quickly. I ask you, sir, to open at once a relief fund, and enclose a small contribution. There are, alas! Austrian *émigrés* enough—men like Otto Bauer and Deutsch—who can advise as to its employment. And the Quakers are always willing to administer such funds.

I enclose a small contribution. "ENGLISHMAN"

Vienna.

[A "Help the Workers of Austria Fund" has already been opened by the National Joint Council of the British Labour Movement (Transport House, Smith Square, S.W.), and we have forwarded "Englishman's" contribution to this.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

LABOUR AND SIR S. CRIPPS

SIR,—As a member of no political party, but one whose views are largely in line with your own, may I be permitted to intervene in the correspondence aroused by your recent article on Sir Stafford Cripps?

It seems to me that the Rev. W. B. Graham and other elder members of the Labour party are wrong in thinking that they will win votes by an appearance of mildness. The last Labour Government were mild enough and went to the extent of trying to combine Liberal Socialism with capitalist *laisser faire*: when the hint of a financial crisis came, they cringed before the bankers and accepted all their demands but one, largely through sheer ignorance of the true meaning of the so-called crisis. In the election that followed, I, like many others, voted for the National Government because they promised definite action in place of futility, however wrong-headed much of their action has since turned out to be.

The past year's events have removed any enthusiasm for the present Government, but I find it difficult to feel confidence in Labour as an alternative unless they can offer the following:—

1. Vigorous action to deal with the most important questions confronting us.

2. No obvious bias in favour of one section of their supporters

As regards the first, I find in "Problems of a Socialist Government" a policy which is at least of a clear-cut nature, but then I understand that its authors are suspect by the official leaders. What is the real position? Do they disagree with the policy outlined, or are they afraid to express their views in such an outspoken manner?

As regards the second, I suggest that Socialism will never be a success unless it is possible to win over a large proportion of the technicians and salaried administrators who are really running the present capitalist regime. For this purpose, it is not helpful to put in the forefront of one's programme such class measures as the repeal of the Trade Unions Act. C. H. W. SMITH

Little Brittons, Spring Woods,
Virginia Water.

A CHILDREN'S MINIMUM

SIR,—I am writing on behalf of the "Children's Minimum" Committee to ask for the support of your readers in our efforts to secure to every child a minimum of healthy living.

The measures we are pressing upon the Government are:

(1) That a daily ration of fresh milk should be made available for all children attending State-aided schools and for younger children through the Public Health Department.

(2) That it should be made compulsory on local authorities to provide school meals for children who, by reason of the poverty of their parents, are inadequately fed.

(3) That the allowances for the children of unemployed persons should be substantially increased.

(4) That encouragement should be given to the extension on Municipal Housing Estates of schemes of rent rebates where the family income is insufficient for minimum needs.

None of these are new; they have all, as you pointed out in your note last week, been advocated in the columns of THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION. The purpose of the committee is simply to mobilise and make effective the strong feeling which already exists in all sections of the community and among people

of all the political parties, that the health of the children should be a first charge upon our returning prosperity. Fish is thrown back into the sea, cabbages are left to rot in the fields, millions of gallons of "surplus" milk are disposed of each month at ridiculously low prices to the manufacturers of butter and cheese, while thousands of children are going short of the very things of which we have an abundance.

We are asking for the co-operation of organisations and individuals who support our general objects, and who approve any or all of the four points which we are urging upon the Government.

We do not want to dissipate our energies in money raising efforts, but we need a small fund for office expenses. I shall be glad to give further particulars to any of your readers willing to contribute to it, or to support us in any other way.

116 Thames House, Millbank, S.W.1. MARJORIE E. GREEN, Secretary

PRISON AND LABOUR

SIR,—The article on Prison Labour, by Miss Craven in your last issue, calls for some comment. It is not realised that it is largely the reductions in prison staff—made as an "economy" measure in 1931—which have led to the reduction in the hours of associated labour to which the article refers; prisoners require less supervision when they are in their cells. The hours are now less than five a day (except in a few special cases), and, though additional work is supposed to be done in cells, we are told that diminutions in orders for mail-bags have made the problem of providing suitable cell work specially difficult. It is estimated that, if the working week were one of forty-four hours (instead of very much less), the average weekly value of a prisoner's work would be about 11*s*. It is clear that the work done in prisons is poor both in quality and quantity, and calls for very little effort on the part of prisoners. To quote the Report on the Employment of Prisoners, several witnesses told us that the effect of a prison sentence was to render the prisoner physically soft and mentally slow, and that this was a severe handicap to the prisoner in his search for employment on release. Some went so far as to suggest that in many cases a prison sentence amounted to a "scientific training in idleness." As long as this state of things continues it is useless to urge that the Courts ought to impose long sentences instead of short ones, because a long sentence is likely to be more reformative. Recommendation (6) in the Report states: "Speed and efficiency of work in prison workshops must be improved in order to guard against deterioration of the physical and moral power of instructors and prisoners." Until this is carried out a short sentence is likely to be less harmful than a long one.

It cannot be said that the Report contains any very hopeful proposals. Even within the present limitations, surely some experiments might be made. A prison colony, trying, as far as possible, to produce everything it wanted, would be more interesting and constructive than prison workshops scrambling for orders from Government departments. And, as productive work is so hard to obtain, prisoners who have some skill or knowledge might be well employed in imparting these to their fellows, and no additional cost would be thereby incurred.

But the inherent difficulty remains; there will continue to be a shortage of work in prisons as long as there are 2½ million unemployed outside. Our existing economic system does not provide enough work to go round, and prisons will, therefore, find it difficult to get as much as they want. It is perhaps in the Isolated Prison in Moscow that one realises as vividly as anywhere in the U.S.S.R. all the implications that follow from a system of "production for use instead of for profit."

Cambridge. CLARA D. RACKHAM

FREDERICK ROLFE

SIR,—I am grateful to Mr. David Garnett for his praises of *The Quest for Corvo*; but, though I appreciate his generous justice to my account of Frederick Rolfe, he seems to me to do far less than justice to that unfortunate writer and his work. It is his opinion that Rolfe is "a wretchedly poor writer whose style only occasionally rises to a certain vituperative grace," and that the contrary opinion I express in my book is due to infatuation. Mr. Garnett quotes certain paragraphs to confirm his criticism; but his excerpts are, as it seems to me, unfortunately chosen, and not truly representative. Since Rolfe's writings are still very little known, I trust you will permit me to remind your readers that there are other views beside those of Mr. Garnett and myself and that Rolfe's title to be an "interesting" and perhaps "important" writer does not rest solely on my assertion. Mr. Shane Leslie has long been singing Rolfe's praises, and has dedicated a book to his memory. The critic of the *Times Literary Supplement* (who evidently did not anticipate Mr. Garnett as devil's advocate) observed in 1924 that "there can, anyhow, be small dispute over the merits of Rolfe's prose, lean, sinewy and polished like the Greek athletes he admired." Mr. Graham Greene calls *Hadrian the Seventh* "a novel of genius which stands in relation to the other novels of its day much as *The Hound of Heaven* stands in relation to the verse." Mr. Ellis Roberts terms the same book a "strange, moving, distasteful, fascinating masterpiece." And for Miss Mary Butts three of "Baron Corvo's" books are "masterpieces of the second order, a little private, a little precious, intensely personal, the work of an ego so concentrated on itself as to be a danger to its possessor; yet all possessed of an extraordinary fascination." And Mr. Desmond MacCarthy, who thinks that I sometimes rate Rolfe's writings too highly, yet finds passages of which he observes that "writing like this is something to be grateful for." Mr. Garnett is an admirable critic, but I believe that, in this matter, your readers will do themselves, as well as Rolfe, an injustice if they accept "on trust" his strictures of Rolfe's books.

Mr. Garnett and myself differ almost as much in our attitude to Rolfe's life as to his work, but to recapitulate and attempt to reconcile our differences would make this letter inordinately long, and I shall, therefore, confine myself to the hope that those who do not share Mr. Garnett's disdain of *Hadrian the Seventh*, will judge its gifted and distorted author less severely than he does.

6 Little Russell Street, W.C.1. A. J. A. SYMONS

[Mr. Garnett replies: "I should hate my readers to accept what I write 'on trust,' and I regret that I cannot appreciate Rolfe. But I can't help it. If I can't see something, it's no good my pretending I think it is there. And I am not alone in my blindness."—ED., N.S. & N.]

INCOME TAX AND UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFIT

SIR,—I see in this week's THE NEW STATESMAN AND NATION you would like the names of those who would oppose any remission of taxation until the unemployed get more money. Please add mine to your list. I am a retired (emeritus) Professor of Architecture of the University of Liverpool. C. H. REILLY

[We are receiving a number of letters to the same effect.—ED., *N.S. & N.*]

Miscellany

REFLECTIONS ON MUSIC

IT is from musicians that we should naturally expect to receive the most illuminating criticism of music, just as the best criticism of poetry has been made by poets. Occasionally, in literature, we find that good criticism has been written by writers who have not produced anything else of merit, and there is no reason to suppose that amateurs of music, as of literature, should be incapable of producing illuminating criticism even although they can produce no music.

Yet a quite special interest will always be found in the criticism of those who are themselves gifted practitioners in the art they criticise. It is, therefore, a good custom of some universities, when they confer an honorary degree upon a distinguished musician, to demand from him a dissertation upon his art to be delivered at the ceremony when the degree is conferred upon him. How interesting, for example, it would have been if Brahms had overcome his dislike of travel and his fear of the musical barbarism of England and had fallen in with the desire of Cambridge University to make him an honorary Doctor of Music. A dissertation by Brahms would have been all the more valuable for the reason that, unlike some composers —Wagner, for example—he was not in the habit of writing voluminously about music, and we may be certain that if he had said anything it would have been worth hearing.

During the past fortnight Artur Schnabel has played Brahms's

two pianoforte concertos; the first (D Minor) with Adrian Boult at the B.B.C. Symphony concert, and the second (B Flat), with Sir Thomas Beecham at the Royal Philharmonic Society's concert; and it so happens that his dissertation *Betrachtungen über Musik* (Reflections on Music), delivered at Manchester University last year when the degree of Mus.D. *honoris causa* was conferred upon him, and published by the Manchester University Press, has just come into my hands.

The text is in German and in an English translation by Cèsar Saerchinger, and it is of interest not only to musicians but to artists generally because it deals with the subject in a general way. Personally, I do not usually find a general philosophical treatment of any art as interesting as particularised criticism of individual works of art; but the subject of Schnabel's dissertation was music, not any particular examples of music, and we cannot legitimately complain because he has stuck to his subject. Like Coleridge's, Artur Schnabel's mind has a philosophical bent and his "Reflections on Music" do not make particularly easy reading even though, unlike most writers in the German language, he uses very short sentences and paragraphs.

His pamphlet is full of pithy sayings which will repay meditation, and it would be necessary to quote far more of it than I have space to do here in order to give the reader a fair account of it, because it is coherent and condensed to a high degree. I will therefore only select certain passages which may most easily stand alone. One of them is on education:

> The question whether the musical ascent of the individual occurs only by virtue of his talents or also by virtue of his training is of particular interest to me. The idea that education might one day become the mother of any number of geniuses, or more exactly, that every educated person could one day become a genius, seems to me the most daringly Utopian dream. I don't think we need to be afraid of that.
>
> I began by saying that I consider everybody musical. In the primitive sense this is obviously true. I have also said that the gift so conferred demands its own enhancement . . . How does it happen that the aptitude to fulfil this demand is not equally represented in all individuals? The German word for aptitude—*Geschick*—also means destiny: does not this double meaning perhaps suggest a profound truth and the correct conception? . . .
>
> The personal impetus toward higher intellectual levels cannot, in my opinion, be produced by outside influence; the urge must be born within him who feels it. Education and environment may give to everyone the opportunity to discover where he feels at home. Without the inborn desire, however, no true relationship to art is possible. Musical appreciation, for instance, is considered to be part of the intellectual "luggage" of so-called educated people; but we know that many of these have no connection even with the name of art, and that they neither pretend to it nor desire it.
>
> . . . In my opinion artistic creation must precede a public demand. The "order" to create the work comes from the gift—the talent—which enables its possessor to create it, although certainly not under the slogan "*l'art pour l'art*." But a complementary "order" emanates from the gift which induces the demand for cultural creations. Otherwise these would not have been continuously produced. . . . .
>
> . . . The preservation and renewal of cultural creation, therefore, depends upon a public demand expressed by understanding and love. This statement is not a contradiction of the previous one that creation must precede demand. A call must precede an echo. The caller who hears no echo will change his place, will utter his call from another. It may be, of course, that the dormant echo invites the call. In any case, someone must first call. Perhaps by intuition he will call only in the place where an echo awaits its awakening.

It seems to me that this is a remarkably just and enlightening description of the relation between the artist and his public, and it suggests, in my opinion, a more correct conception of the true process of cultural development which is usually concealed from us under the word "education." The ordinary idea of education is that all persons indiscriminately can be made by a dire process of repetition to understand and respond to what is being said to them. If this is true at all it is certainly only true of the lowest, most elementary levels. What really happens is this mysterious dualism of call and echo, and all cultural creation is the product of this meeting of call and echo, a sort of communication which we might truthfully describe as a kind of spiritual marriage wherein lies the potentiality of future works of art. The notion that an artist can create, without any public at all, any response anywhere to his call, seems to me absurd. Further, it ought also to be equally clear that there can be no discrepancy between the call and the echo. For, to continue Schnabel's most illuminating simile, the artist who gets an entirely alien echo to his call will move elsewhere just as decisively as if he had received no response at all. The correspondence between the call and the response must be absolute.

Here it is that we find a justification for the real importance we instinctively attach to cultural opportunities and to a public of highly developed receivers as well as to the existence of creators. What is of inestimable importance to a community is not only the existence of creators—those gifted or destined to create—since these are provided by nature, but the provision of means by which they can make their call in many different places. For this latter provision depends upon the organisation of society as a whole. What is particularly bad at the present time is that nearly all the arts are made dependent for their activity upon their capacity to earn money. Now you can only earn money upon the scale that interests money-makers (and a scale that can compete for the places of vantage where the "call" can be made with other money making enterprises) when you make your call to a vast multitude. If the call is on any but the most elementary plane the echo may be nil—and, consequently, the money. The artist would not mind, he would merely move somewhere else; but this under present conditions is exactly what is so difficult for him to do. Money-makers are not interested in a call which does not produce fifty thousand to half a million echoes, and everything to-day is dependent on this universal craze for making money. The money is mere paper money or credit tokens in the bank ledgers of a few and brings no increase of real wealth to the community as a whole, either material or cultural. But the substance is daily being sacrificed to this shadow and the situation of the artist is, in my opinion, steadily getting worse.

W. J. TURNER

Everywhere you go

YOU CAN BE SURE OF SHELL

NOTES FROM A HAMPSHIRE HILLSIDE

IT is no new phenomenon, this lack of interest shown by the honest town-bred intelligentsia in country happenings. (I suspect the spontaneity of certain recent excursions along garden paths.) Though town was a very much more rural thing in his days than in ours, Charles Lamb would not have been a good man to take round one's flower borders. Nearly all my most congenial conversational collaborators are cultivated townsmen, engaged in the pursuit of that shy quarry, literature. I, also, am interested in such things. Yet I should as soon think of taking a herd of cattle round my vegetable plot as these, my friends, along my flower-edged garden walks. It would be too irritating and too humiliating.

"You are a rum chap," says my friend. "Here you are, in the middle of lovely trees, your hillside covered with all sorts of beautiful flowers, complaining that time isn't long enough; and yet you spend hours a day working like a poor devil of a farm labourer, digging the ground, or messing about with some little plant that belongs to China or Brazil or somewhere, looking after it as if it were a sick child or the goose that lays the golden eggs." To exoteric observers, the gardener's enthusiasm must seem a kind of manic obsession. The rationalist has indeed a convincing case. The gardener is not likely to grow flowers more beautiful than are to be found in meadow and in hedgerow. None of his decorative effects is likely to equal, much less surpass, those of natural woodland or moor.

Obviously, early associations have a lot to do with these things—these tastes, as we call them. I can recall with vividness the time when I first sowed some seeds in a few square feet of ground that I was told I could call my garden. My mother gave me a pinch of candytuft seed, three or four nasturtium seeds, and half a thimbleful of mignonette. I was just over five years old; and I had for months been gloating over that delightful little book, the Rev. C. A. Johns's *Gardening for Children*—given to my mother nearly thirty years before I was born. Transplanting and watering and generally tending the little seedlings until, in due course, they flowered, kept me happily occupied for a season. But a match had been applied to something inside me, and the fire then lit has never gone out.

Interest in gardens is provoked by different excitants in different individuals; but I sometimes wonder if a taste for gardening may not be primarily a matter of genetics. Possibly gardeners, like poets, owe their idiosyncrasies, as the feeble-minded are said to do, to a complex of genes peculiarly enviroined. Both my father and my mother were keen gardeners, though of very different types. Both were efficient and orderly; either would have blushed if a visitor had found a weed in path or border. Both were energetic and zealous, thinking no labour too heavy, no expenditure of time too great, if thereby their several notions of perfection could be more nearly realised. My mother, however, was willing to go to greater lengths in her single-mindedness than was my father. I well remember enjoyable evening walks, my mother armed with a queer sort of wooden basket and a flat trowel, like that of a giant plasterer; I, equipped with a bag and trowel of more orthodox shape. Our goal was a certain meadow, rich in two treasures. One was a special kind of dark fine earth, thrown up into convenient mounds by the moles. With this I filled my bag. My mother undertook the more specialist task. There are cow-droppings and cow-droppings; she knew the exact degree of ripeness and dryness that represented the ideal for her purpose. With our heavy but valuable loads we would go home again; and, for the next hour or two, my mother would be busy as any cook or chemist, blending and qualifying her mixture, and re-potting her genistas and her fuchsias and the rest of her charges; whilst I, small acolyte, fetched and carried the sacred vessels to and from the altar. There is nothing very surprising in this bit of historic psychology; but I suppose it *is* a bit rum that, more than five decades later, I still feel pretty much as I felt then, and as she doubtless felt then. For, although our tasks were different, our interest and enthusiasm were alike.

Social philosophers are much concerned over the problem of what people are to do with the increased leisure now, or about to be, at everybody's disposal. Fancy a gardener wondering what he could do with his leisure time! I suppose that is why gardeners are, on the whole, the happiest people in the world. We have lately been told that happiness is the best index of real health; and it is an interesting fact that gardeners stand out in the Registrar-General's returns as the longest-lived of all of us—surpassing in vitality even those more formal worshippers of divinity, the clergy. The pragmatic reply to the sceptical rationalist is not ineffective. H. R.

FINE COGNAC—

AGED in wood. The perfect Brandy. The finest Liqueur. Even the glasses reflect the shadow of the cask in which 'Cordon B'leu' is matured for 35 years.

MARTELL'S
CORDON BLEU

PLAYS AND PICTURES

"Faustus": O.U.D.S.

To produce Marlowe's *Faustus* in the Oxford Town Hall without curtains or footlights, on a platform flanked by a pair of pale green garden seats and backed by a triad of peach-coloured bathing tents, was very difficult indeed. Apart from *Faustus*, the play contains no credible consistent character, and where in Faustus himself we are faced with credible consistency the result is something inevitably unsympathetic. The part, however, is one of great opportunities, and Mr. R. F. Felton made impressive use of them. His Faustus was brilliantly intelligent, sensitive as acting and almost completely avoiding in delivery the oratorical emphasis into which the part tends to slip. Faced with a harder task, Mr. P. B. P. Glenville as Mephistopheles was less successful.

Faustus is pre-eminently a play that depends on its production. Under the circumstances it was not to be expected that the O.U.D.S. production would be more than adequate. The tempo which was slow (by a stroke of verisimilitude it was almost midnight when Faustus was finally consigned to hell), could not have been better. The treatment of the supernatural element was un-

imaginative and consequently unconvincing; in the final scene the appearance of Lucifer and Beelzebub formed a disagreeably prosaic anti-climax to Faustus' splendidly tense soliloquy. Mr. Angus McBean's masks provided the touch of inspiration elsewhere absent.

"Success Story"

This play has good stuff in it, and its transference from the Fulham Shilling Theatre, where it was produced in January, should be more than justified. Wordy, hectic and sentimental as it is, it gets its ideas across well, and rouses an audience from mere apathetic tolerance. Its story is moral, and concerns a young Jew who misuses his romantic revolutionary fervour to abase himself before the god of money, and comes to a premature end when he has bathed himself in all the empty luxuries of wealth. It is shallow enough, but there are many telling touches. To have its full effect it should be played by an all-American cast in a thoroughly hard-boiled manner, and, failing this, the cast at the Cambridge Theatre do the next best thing, and act with admirable speed and decision, making very few concessions to American stage-mannerisms or pronunciation. Mr. Esmé Percy, who plays the young Jew, pursues his monotonous sing-song too deliberately. Often it destroys the sense of his lines and, though there is power in his performance, he is only really effective when he drops it. Miss Beatrix Lehmann acts a long part with studied restraint, and Miss Jeanne de Casalis uses her tact and experience with fine results. If one can stand the solemn, common place morality of this play there are plenty of rewards.

Farce with a Difference

Hampered as it is with a great deal of cumbersome and old-fashioned machinery, unduly exposed by a very laboured production, *Paul Twyning*, the Irish peasant farce at the Little Theatre, provides some excellent entertainment, sharply flavoured with a social satire which is shrewd and stinging, even though the conditions it lampoons are necessarily remote from an English audience. James Deegan, J.P., is a broadly comic caricature of an old farmer whose sturdy independence has developed, from lack of opposition, into a full-blooded, selfish tyranny. His children are poor, mentally and morally stunted, specimens, crafty, dishonest and cringing; Mr. Shiels exaggerates their weaknesses past realism and puts them into a stereotyped plot involving the descent upon them of an apparently rich and scheming spinster who is returning to her native village from America in search of a husband. The characters are continually being caught in compromising positions, and monotonously pop in and out of the next room or a curious cupboard apparently some nine inches deep. Most of this is tedious fooling, but there remains Arthur Sinclair in the name part, a tramp-journeyman who has been engaged to plaster Deegan's new house, and remains to instigate scheme and counter-scheme, towering over the bumpkins with a magniloquent truculence and a judicial wisdom which provide all the best moments of the piece. Sinclair's range is too limited to deserve the highest of all tributes: but, if he is not a great actor, he has developed for himself a great stage personality, and there is no individual performance to be seen in London at the present time which is richer or more subtle in comic detail. Mr. Fred O'Donovan as Dan calculates his ninnydom to a nicety, and Mr. Grenville Darling bombinates very satisfyingly as the crabbed ancient, but Miss Maire O'Neill's customary ebullience is unfortunately subdued, possibly by the demands of American idiom.

"The Boatswain's Mate"

The production at Sadler's Wells in honour of Dame Ethel Smyth's seventy-fifth birthday, of her comedy opera *The Boatswain's Mate*, was well conceived and executed. Sir Thomas Beecham conducted and the cast was well chosen. Perhaps the most convincing and artistic performance was that of Ruth Naylor as Mrs. Waters. The story by W. W. Jacobs which provides the libretto is an entertaining trifle, but its humour proves heavy-handed and obvious on the stage.

In any case one feels that only the lightest and deftest musical invention would have been able to carry this plot effectively, and it is an odd fact that nowhere in this musical treatment does Dame Ethel Smyth show the lively sense of humour which is present in her greatest writings. *The Boatswain's Mate*, with its chorus of agricultural labourers and its two cats, is a rough and tumble affair, and the best music is in the overture.

In the same bill is Arthur Benjamin's one act opera *The Devil Take Her*. Although the music is in no sense original or of especial interest in itself yet it is well-constructed and achieves the desired effects. Consequently this opera is effective by reason of its admirable craftsmanship and skilful use of the traditional operatic methods. Winifred Kennard gave a lively performance as the dumb wife, and D. Morgan Jones was quietly effective as the poet, although his words were not always audible. Sir Thomas Beecham conducted and the audience was warmly appreciative of this double bill.

Refreshing Pictures

Our younger painters have a lot to be thankful for in the existence of a gallery with a steadily increasing reputation where they can show work before their names are household words. The Zwemmer Galleries in Litchfield Street have made another good choice in Miss Norah McGuinness, whose oils and water-colours they are now showing. Irish by birth, she here shows the fruits of excursions in Dieppe, Donegal and Sussex. She uses water-colour in a free and unselfconscious way, and can seize and fix a design in this medium with a rare verve and sureness. These water-colours look still wet from the brush; as if each was the result of an experience which it would have been a crime to miss. In oils she has yet to find so sure a method of registering her feelings, but in *Petworth Park* and *The Mill* the inevitability of the design has kept the emotion well keyed up. Her danger is that, acting on a sure instinct, she may place too great a reliance on it and be too easily satisfied: her merit is that her pictures are free from that intellectual swagger that nullifies the work of so many young painters in England, who decide that they must have a reason for everything and end by having a feeling for nothing. Blake uttered a warning with his remarks about "confident insolence sprouting from systematic reasoning," but it is remembered too seldom. That sort of insolence in painting is *chic* nowadays, and it is a relief when, as here, one finds it in abeyance.

THE COMING WEEK

FRIDAY, February 23rd—
W. H. Kerridge on "Russia," Guildhouse, Eccleston Square, 8.

SATURDAY, February 24th—
Rugby Football, Scotland *v.* Ireland, Edinburgh.
Huberman, Violin Recital, Queen's Hall, 3.

SUNDAY, February 25th—
S. K. Ratcliffe on "The New American Revolution," Conway Hall, 11.
"The Deluge" and "The Dance of Death," Westminster Theatre.
Moiseiwitsch, Palladium, 3.15.
Norman Smith on "Practical Socialism," Willoughby Hall, 1 Willoughby Road, Hampstead, 7.30.

MONDAY, February 26th—
Public Meeting for the Release of the Reichstag Prisoners. Speeches by F. W. Pethick-Lawrence, the Earl of Listowel, Prof. Laski and others. Kingsway Hall, 8.
Huberman, Violin Recital, Free Trade Hall, Manchester, 8.
Dr. C. P. Blacker on "Eugenic Sterilisation," London School of Hygiene, Keppel Street, 8.
William Mellor on "A Programme for a Socialist Government," The Institute, Central Square, N.W.11, 8.15.
La Compagnie des Quinze in "Don Juan," Globe Theatre.

TUESDAY, February 27th—
Capt. Etienne Bach on "The Knights of Peace," Friends House, Euston Road, 1.20.
G. P. Gooch on "The Outlook in Europe," Kensington Town Hall, 5.30.
Dr. E. Graham Howe on "Law and the Social Group," Friends House, Euston Road, 5.45.
Prof. H. Levy on "Is Science Culture?" Conway Hall, 7.
Poetry Reading by Mr. Humbert Wolfe, Mary Ward Settlement, 36 Tavistock Place, 8.

WEDNESDAY, February 28th—
Lecture by Mrs. Grace Lovat Fraser, in aid of the London Child Guidance Clinic, on "Clothes Yesterday and the Day Before," American Women's Club, 46 Grosvenor Street, 5.30. Tickets (10s. 6d.) obtainable from the Secretary.
"The Golden Toy," Coliseum.

THURSDAY, March 1st—
Sir John Marriott on "Problems of the Modern State," University of London, Imperial Institute Road, 5.30.
Rev. Dr. J. K. Mozley on "The Church," City Literary Institute, Goldsmith Street, Drury Lane, 7.30.
Miss J. I. Wall on "The Delinquent and Neglected Child," Morley College, 8.
Royal Philharmonic Orchestra, conducted by Adrian Boult, Queen's Hall, 8.15.
Dr. Susan Isaacs on "Rebellious Children," 36 Gloucester Place, 8.30.

Current Literature

BOOKS IN GENERAL

It is always pleasant to examine the character of a happy man, especially if the happiness he enjoyed proved consistent with a knowledge of the world and with a wide and critical experience of his fellow human beings; and as we read through *The Creevey Papers* it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that these letters, jotting and memorials are the record of a man who, in his own way and within his own limits, was alike happy, successful and self-satisfied. For one thing, he had made the most of his opportunities. Of regrets, Mr. Creevey can have had very few; a secret sorrow, or the gnawing sense of failure that often twines itself among the laurels of success, could find little room in so harmonious and eupeptic a temperament. Not that Mr. Creevey was a vapid optimist; not that the name "Creevey" is a synonym for "Pickwick," or that this hard-bitten, profane, loud-laughing Regency gentleman was just such another big baby, with a pink beaming face and a powdered head, as Dickens might have used to stuff a novel. Quite the contrary; Mr. Creevey was a man of affairs. He was a cynic, a satirist and, though never a debauchee, had eaten enormous dinners, got tipsy, bawled comic songs, attended divisions, made fun of his betters and stood up for his rights—all without the slightest trace of weariness or the smallest vestige of Victorian moral scruple — for the best part of fifty active and laborious years. Above everything else, he was not a prig. That his good fortune had been hard won, and that the position he occupied in English society was both important and extremely privileged, Mr. Creevey would not have troubled to deny. He would have admitted that he was much liked and frequently sought after, that peeresses and Royal Dukes admired and flattered him. He remembered that he was the obscure son of a Liverpool tradesman; but he had nothing of the fatuity of the average parvenu. . . .

* * *

Yet, as an adventurer, his triumphs did not pall. When Sir Herbert Maxwell made a first selection from the Creevey Papers some thirty years ago, he gave us a complete and memorable portrait of the politician, diner out and general busybody, whose buzzings, gaddings and intriguings were only stilled in the haven of a singularly unruffled and well-balanced domestic life. On that portrait, *Creevey's Life and Times*, a further selection, edited by Mr. John Gore (*Murray*, 18*s*.) cannot improve. A great deal of the new material is very interesting—much of it is extremely amusing—but it neither qualifies nor takes away a single feature of the Creevey we have known and admired. On the other hand, it strengthens our early impressions. Creevey reappears as the man who, without money, without influence—if we except the theory that he was an illegitimate son of Lord Sefton—by sheer charm and native integrity of character established himself in the centre of every Whig drawing-room that he thought it worth his while to penetrate. Was he a snob? He was certainly not a toady. No reader of Sir Herbert Maxwell's volume will have forgotten the dreadful scene that broke out because Mr. Lambton, the future Lord Durham—otherwise "King Jog": "one can jog along on £40,000 a year"—neglected to see that his servants supplied Mr. Creevey, as well as himself, with fish. "*Lambton*," cried Mr. Creevey, in a voice of thunder—but the episode is too well known to merit detailed recapitulation.

* * *

His most conspicuous trait was a sturdy independence. By declining to be bullied or put upon, Mr. Creevey soon reached an altitude where he himself became a patron rather than a parasite. But his tyranny was exercised in the blandest way. He was fond of his fellow creatures and there is abundant evidence that they, in their turn, were devoted to him. Children and women he always delighted. He was "droll," he was irrepressible; formality fled at his approach. "At five o'clock yesterday evening," he wrote from Lowther in 1827, "I thought I was entering the most formal house in England, and at half-past six dear Lady Lonsdale and I were going out arm in arm to dinner, three boys of Colonel Lowther's pulling with all their might and main at my coat flaps to make me stay and play with them." No wonder that, while Mr. Creevey was with the men, the ladies in the drawing-room (or so Mr. Creevey himself assures us) listened regretfully to the gusts of amusement they could not share. No wonder that acquaintances were "damned affable"; that the Duke of Norfolk—to whom Mr. Creevey had once had occasion to write an extremely stiff letter—continued to pester him with invitation to eat "some of his *six year old mutton*," and that "little Sussex," who, like his brother, the Duke of Clarence—known as "Our Billy"—had a habit of blurting out his mind with almost apoplectic vehemence, bellowed his appreciation across the dinner table.

* * *

So much for the social burdens of a public life; but it had its pleasures too, and on June 3rd, 1828, a company that included Lord Sefton, Creevey's particular friend, Lord and Lady Grey and many others, are spoken of as having "consumed thirteen quarts of turtle from the London Tavern" at a party following the races. "The dinner was sufficiently gay, and the night even *boisterous*, in as much as at our *Gallery* or low Whist Table, Mull, Jules and I sang a medley of French and English so loud and to tunes so charmingly popular that we broke up the *deep* whist table, and the Clerk of the Council, Greville, was so sulky, he would never utter afterwards; Sefton, Grey, and all the ladies being convulsed at our merits and success." Creevey's interruption may explain a somewhat acid reference in Greville's famous memoirs. It must be admitted that, for a reform party, the Whigs of that period lived a comfortable and not unduly ascetic or unostentatious life. Lord Durham himself was an uncrowned king; when he received the Duke of Sussex at Doncaster, King Jog's equipage (Creevey tells us) consisted of "a Coach and six with *seven* out-riders, and two standing footmen, from 600 to 700 tenants and others on horseback, with the contents of Collieries and Cottages by thousands upon thousands on foot." That "the contents of Collieries and Cottages" might, in time of distress, find such a display of magnificence faintly galling does not seem to have occurred to Mr. Creevey; though there were moments when the arrogant and stupid luxury of great wealth—of Lady Foley, for instance, who presided every night at the Hazard table, flanked by a massive gold tray, "deeply laden with gold and silver money, every piece of which has been *washed and cleaned* by the Butler," and of the Duchess of St. Albans, formerly Mrs. Coutts, than whom "a more disgusting, frowsy, hairy old B. could not have been found in the Seven Dials," struck from him a spark of vivid rage. "Now to think," he concluded, "of poor people actually starving for want of vituals, and this prodigal fool and devil to be alive and merry."

* * *

I have quoted at sufficient length from *Creevey's Life and Times* to make it quite clear that Mr. Creevey's modern admirers will not be disappointed by Mr. John Gore's new selection. Here are no set-pieces as sustained and dramatically diverting as Creevey's celebrated account of the negotiations that led to the birth of Queen Victoria; but here are many episodes, many turns of phrase and glimpses of Regency high-life at its best and worst, for which a reader must be permanently and profoundly grateful. Old friends and familiar nick-names reappear. Brougham is still "Wickedshifts," and "the same tortuous villain as ever"; Madame de Lieven is still "the Snipe," a reference, presumably, to her long nose; while Lady Darlington, "the Cyprian Countess"—she had lived with her husband before marrying him—is still hit off as "The Pop" or "The Poplolly." How many Cyprian Countesses of the present time, how many politicians and female diplomatists, if they lack a Mr. Creevey to lend them substance, will live and breathe when they have been dead a hundred years?

PETER QUENNELL

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LOOKING BACK

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It is not often that a literary prize competition produces anything of striking merit and I have heard of several that were won by books hardly worth publishing. The reason must surely be that the competitions were misconceived. They were devised by publishers in the hopes of getting what they wanted without considering whether any class of persons existed who could supply it. It is no good offering money for the finest figs grown on thistles and it is no good hoping to get—for the sake of example—a humorous masterpiece by offering a thousand pounds or so and royalties.

But one literary competition has proved a most striking success. It was organised in America by Scribner's Magazine which offered a prize, or several prizes, for the best first-hand experience of contemporary life in the United States. Four thousand five hundred persons sent in their stories and of these twenty-seven have here been chosen, one author being represented twice. The resulting book has the exuberance and the sweep of a poem of Whitman's. Individually the stories are admirable but the effect of the book as a whole is better still, for it succeeds in giving a vast and varied picture of the whole country, and the reader becomes aware of teeming worlds of human life, almost as isolated from each other as the planets are in space. The cities, mountains, prairies, deserts and rivers stretch illimitably. This effect is due to twenty-six authors having been brought within the covers of one book. Each tells his personal experience in his personal world. Each is separated completely from the others.

There is nothing on this English edition to tell who were the selectors, but they certainly made the right choice in giving the first prize to Frances Prentice for *Oklahoma Race Riot*, the story of how two cars of armed negroes, careering round in the hope of saving a boy from the possibility of lynching, sent the white population mad, burning and massacring for a day and night. The account is absolutely restrained, perfectly quiet in tone, and after reading it one feels that one has lived through the agonising experience and understood the problem which can never be solved by any emotional outburst against injustice and against cruelty. If that story were used in all American schools perhaps the madness it describes would be less likely to break out.

The negro presents in some ways a more insoluble problem for America than any which has to be faced in Europe; the ills of war and Nationalism *could* be overcome by plain common sense. The colour-prejudice is deeper, like an instinct in a great number of white people. It is perhaps no more good merely pointing out its cruelty and injustice than it would be talking to cats of tolerance to sparrows. Instinct (which may have a valuable side) and ethics contradict each other and this makes the negro one of the most moving subjects for American writers to-day, which is exemplified in two other admirable stories, *The Black Belt* and *Muscadines for Pink Corsets*. But by no means all the writers have chosen the darker side of American life. Many of the stories have the riotous freshness, the wonderful rushing optimism that infects the visitor when he first breathes the champagne air of the New World. Such is the story of pioneering in Montana which won the second prize, and such is the jolly story called *He-Rain*: the magic rain called down by the Hopi Indians which nearly washed away the motor-cars of visitors who have come to watch the Snake Dance. For sheer exuberance the best is *Beer Town*, a glorious Rabelaisian memory called up to chase away the hang-over mood of Prohibition with the reek of malt, the smell of hops, the foam of beer, the tittupping of barrels, clatter of battering bright-sandalled drayhorses and shouts of brewer's men.

But though the landscapes are always American, the manner in which they are drawn is not always original. Thus in *And the Cops Got Their Men*, the description of a motor-chase of gangsters in New York is obviously influenced by Hemingway, and *Corn Village* by Maribel Le Sueur, who also wrote the delightful *Beer Town*, is unadulterated D. H. Lawrence. Indeed, the method of writing and attitude of mind of this interpretation of the Middle West unwittingly evoke, for the reader who knows Lawrence's stories well, that absolutely different country, the Nottingham coalfields and the scenery of the English Midlands. Eastwood hangs like a ghost over the prairie and produces one of the most weird literary sensations of second-sight, or of seeing double, that I have ever experienced. There are so many very good stories here that I cannot mention them all. *A Radical Childhood* by Rian Creovici is the most amusing of all.

DAVID GARNETT

NEW NOVELS

Landslide. By MONICA CURTIS. *Gollancz.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
The Tide. By VINCENT SHEEHAN. *Methuen.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
"Scarlet Josephine." By MARJORIE WORTHINGTON. *Hamish Hamilton.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
Swan's Milk. By LOUIS MARLOW. *Faber.* 7*s.* 6*d.*
The Sycamore Tree. By ELIZABETH CAMBRIDGE. *Cape.* 7*s.* 6*d.*

From 1912 to late in 1915 a group of men and women between the ages of eighteen and twenty-three, many of them then and to this day personally unknown to each other and their editor (the present reviewer), produced a magazine of poems, stories, plays and drawings. It was typewritten and appearing every two months was posted from hand to hand. Upon blank sheets provided at the end we inscribed candid criticisms of each other's work. Some of the contributors sooner or later made letters their profession or recreation—among others, the late Romer Wilson, Miss Doreen Wallace and Miss Dorothy Sayers (the last two being known to their earliest colleagues as poets only). To this list must now be added Miss Monica Curtis: after eighteen years I am once more in the position of her critic.

Miss Curtis, to judge by *Landslide*, is a romantic with a sense of humour: she loves predicaments, escapes, mountains, noble friendships, and conversations overheard at night; she has also an agreeable taste in jokes. Her foreword states that "this is a story about people" but, convincing though her dialogue is, and although she is far from indifference towards character, the persons of her drama are not her chief concern. For instance, she coops six of them up for months in a remote valley, access to which has been blocked by a landslide, and apart from some mild love-making and one quarrel between rival lovers, we are given little insight into the effect on their relation to each other. How the irritable hypersensitive, intellectual Austin would have grown to loathe the insouciant, aristocratic, motor-minded Charles! How the simple Joyce, who—according to her aunt on p. 169—suffered from arrested development, would have palled on the three members of the party who were not in love with her! But Joyce is only *officially* the heroine; Miss Curtis's real heroine is celebrated on her title-page—"the mountain nymph, sweet Liberty." With mellow wit, learning, skill and restrained emotion, in firm and flexible prose, Miss Curtis clearly and persuasively shows an England gone the way of Hitler and Mussolini:

> There was no ostensible change in the method by which affairs were conducted. . . . Monarchical and republican institutions were respected, and Parliaments continued to meet; but more and more of the decisions which mattered were taken by other means.

"Because, of course," a minor character is made to say, "we never could have a Dictator in England. The papers call him (Leo Steele) the Business Dictator, but of course that's quite different." Of course! We are shown just how different. Austin, and his friend Thomas, a young lecturer in economics whose hobby is mountaineering, run a paper in which articles on outdoor activities are interleaved with matter subversive of the Dictatorship. On discovery by the Censor, Austin and his printer are imprisoned after a sham-trial by the Anti-Social Offences Tribunal. Later, in an exciting manner, Thomas and an older friend Edward rescue Austin from a mob which is out to lynch conscientious objectors to the regime in force, and, with the help of Charles, convey him to High Savoy, where Edward's niece and wife are spending a holiday. The rest of the carefully worked out plot gives scope for more of this author's very varied talents: there is exactly the right amount of snow-scenery, not-too-technical climbing, and amusing conversation. She is at her best, however, on the subject of abstract values—whether expressed by her persons' talk and her own discreet and lucid comments, or embodied in the figure of Edward. Miss Curtis, unlike most novelists, is more successful in portraying the opposite sex. About Clemence and Joyce her tone and touch are perhaps a little too tender; but with Edward she has done what she foreshadows in her Preface—made him symbolic of something greater than himself: a philosophy, a point of view. Without a trace of priggishness, because he is himself unconscious of it, he represents what Keats meant by Negative Capability. But it is the philosophy, rather than Edward and his friends, that *Landslide* is "about"; and there one touches on the book's weakness. The story is sensational, almost a highbrow's shocker (shocker, as opposed to detective-story), and it does not fuse completely with the philosophy; the impression, as a whole, is slightly disintegrated. Edward could have been equally symbolic while being more fully

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himself in a soberer setting; and though we should have missed thrills, we should have had a better book and perhaps, even a finer tribute to the mountain nymph.

The individual parts of *Landslide*, though brilliant and mellow, do not form a highly satisfactory whole; it is as a whole that *The Tide* makes its mark. Just as Mr. Sheehan's humour is more pungent and less kindly than Miss Curtis's, so his scheme is narrower, his book less rich but more shapely. *The Tide* covers a week; New York is its scene. There arrives from Egypt (which is glad to be rid of him) a young Arabian prophet who, having worked a miracle (or wasn't it?) on board the liner, is naturally the target of every newspaperman in town. He is a slender creature with an Oxford accent and a personality so powerful in its gentleness that he instantly impresses even the hard-boiled star-reporter, Ann Howard, and how much more the Syrian population of the Battery! These effects and the numerous characters are described with great skill and admirable economy.

America is also the scene of "*Scarlet Josephine*"; but whereas Mr. Sheehan shows complete control of his material from the word Go, Miss Worthington begins by arousing the reader's incredulity. Could a small, backwater, manufacturing town have produced Ellen Abernathy?—a woman in poor circumstances who, never having left home, was yet so emancipated from the taboos of Main Street that she pressed her beloved *Lady Chatterley* on the postman's wife and glibly introduced the topic of abortion into a chat with the local deaconess? If the reader is willing deliberately to suspend his own disbelief, he will enjoy the quiet, sensitive story of how Ellen gloried in solitude and literary composition, because she knew how not to let convention interfere with them. "*Scarlet Josephine*" was the title of her first novel, which turned out a best-seller.

Mr. Louis Marlow is a writer with considerable power of characterisation, as he showed in *The Lion Took Fright*. In *Swan's Milk* it is the minor persons who come to life for a few moments, before the kaleidoscope changes: the schoolmaster, for instance, whose attention alarmed his pupil Mr. Marlow, "because Mr. Evans always beat with a fives-bat the boys whom he fancied." Or Marcus, the schoolboy friend of the book's hero, Dexter:

> He must have been an imaginative boy. Dexter remembered that when they broke stones on the beach Marcus told him that inside were impressions of scenes attended by the stones in their earliest existence. "That one," he said, "is the Battle of Lake Regilius."

Swan's Milk is an imaginary autobiography and, like another effort in this genre recently reviewed here, introduces real people by name, among them Mr. Llewelyn Powys, who supplies the book with an enthusiastic blurb. I can only half-heartedly echo his enthusiasm—perhaps in the same spirit that makes one look less carefully at school-groups in which one's self and one's particular friends do not occur. I quite believe that Dexter Foothood, Mr. Marlow, and their friends were clever, spirited youths, but owing to its wandering and inconsecutive method, this scandalous chronicle of their early lives is not of absorbing interest. Dexter is not made a sufficiently compelling figure to give it unity, and there is often something boringly adolescent in the challenging air with which, much to Mr. Powys's avowed delight, subjects are introduced which fiction usually treats in an oblique manner. It is distracting, too, each time a new person enters, to wonder whether he is fictitious or a portrait; and yet it is impossible to read the book simply as a novel—its tone is too much that of the button-holeing gossip. It has a haphazard air, as though friends of the writers had assisted at its production, now saying "You must bring Maugham and Reggie Turner in here," now reminding him of how they nailed their enemies' nameplates over the college jakes. But, though a failure as a novel, *Swan's Milk* will provide rich entertainment for those who were Dexter's contemporaries at Radley in the late 'nineties; at Pembroke College, Oxford, from which he, Mr. Marlow, and three boon-companions were expelled for blasphemy; and at St. John's College, Cambridge, which he subsequently adorned.

I did not read *Hostages to Fortune*, and so cannot affix a useful comparative label to Miss Cambridge's new book. *The Sycamore Tree* is leisurely, even rather slow, serious and subjective. Its method is as distant as the moon from the vivid, biting, objective method of such writers as Miss Kay Boyle and Mr. Hemingway. Here every incident is commented on, and incidentally sometimes blurred, by the author; psychologically, the reader is not trusted an inch of the way alone. (He is, however, sometimes left in the dark as to where certain incidents took place.) Howell Coombe begins as the usual sensitive child of fiction; it is an immense relief to discover that he is not to be an artist of any kind, but an engineer. He early becomes an intensely inhibited creature, unable to love or hate, and this is so well conveyed that, were it certain that such was the author's intention, it would largely determine one's favourable opinion of the novel. But it is far from certain; it may even be that Howell is intended as a man of feeling. The conversion which he undergoes at the end, when he is over thirty, realising that he has "wasted too many years trying to be liked" and feeling "ashamed of the length of his apprenticeship," comes unexpectedly, despite the indications of mysticism in his early emotion towards the sycamore tree: we have been shown neither his adult mind nor his intuitions with sufficient clearness to prepare us for the change. Miss Cambridge's theme is large, and she treats it without pretension or sentimentality, but her want of grip on the constituents of her story, in addition to the poor, uncharacteristic quality of her dialogue, prevent the theme taking proper form. She seems to have tried, by a multitude of touches, some graceful, some superfluous or inapt, to make up for the essential firm touch which was lacking. Themes, great or little, must in fiction be embodied in characters. Miss Cambridge, though brave, intelligent and honest, does not (or, if this be in fact her earlier novel, did not) possess the necessary technique for making Howell the vehicle of hers.

E. B. C. JONES

TOLLER

I Was a German. By ERNST TOLLER. *John Lane*. 5s.

This autobiography is that of an intellectual who was not *only* disappointed and disgusted by the War, but who projected his feelings into action on a national scale, and it deserves to be read for that reason alone. But there are others. There is, for instance, the fascinating interest of the story. I have little room unfortunately for his account of his youth, on the Polish border, save to say that it is too short. The whole book, in fact, is too short and too congested: a tiny, squashed parcel of delicious foods. It is badly packed, and there is not nearly enough.

Immediately after the War, Herr Toller began to feel those influences which were to help to make him not only the most celebrated revolutionary dramatist, but one of the most maligned revolutionary leaders, in Germany. The Western Front had had its usual effect on a mind still able to think for itself. But instead of subsiding into the ranks of the *zivilizations-literaten* as Thomas Mann calls them, the frustrated, querulous intelligentsia, Herr Toller began to speak at meetings. When Eisner went to Munich to organise the revolution, he accompanied him as his aide. Here the story, and one feels sure of its impartiality, begins to be one of the nobility, humanity, and tenacity of a man in the face of horror after horror. The hopeless, internecine incompetence of the various revolutionary authorities—Communists against the author's party, the Bavarian Soviet—gradually ruined the whole cause. Herr Toller, who had already been in prison before the Socialist outbreak, began to be arrested constantly, and, after the subjection of Munich by the White Troops, there started a popular hunt for him in which his value was placarded all over Germany at 10,000 marks. He was eventually caught and sent to a fortress for five years. It was during his imprisonment that *Masse Mensch* was written.

Of this play, he says:—

> I felt at odds with myself. I had always believed that Socialists, despising force, should never employ it for their own ends. And now I myself had used force . . . I who hated bloodshed had caused blood to be shed. I remember how in Stadelheim an opportunity for escape has presented itself and I had refused to take advantage of it lest my flight should cost a warder his life. . . . Must the man of action always be dogged by guilt? Always? The masses, it seemed, were impelled by hunger and want rather than by ideals. Would they still be able to conquer if they renounced force for the sake of an ideal? Can a man not be an individual and a mass-man at one and the same time? Is not the struggle between the individual and the mass decided in a man's own mind as well as fought out in the community? . . . It was this conflict that inspired my play.

I had heard, and from an inhabitant of the working-class, such blood-curdling tales of Munich during the Bavarian Soviet, that I had come to regard Herr Toller, President of their Central Committee, as almost the Bolshy Fiend of popular legend. But unless his remarkable talents as a writer include a more than remarkable talent for deceit, I am now prepared to alter my opinion to the degree of saying that he is a man whose life might well be taken as an example to the world. Certainly, the world needs precisely such men, and as never before. For the man of action he is an example because he does not cease to think, and

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BRIAN HOWARD

THE GRAND INQUISITOR

After Strange Gods. A PRIMER OF MODERN HERESY. By T. S. ELIOT. *Faber*. 3*s*. 6*d*.

This little book (a reprint of three lectures) contains, as far as I have understood it, nothing new. Writers should (if they can) be "traditional" and "orthodox," and critics should write about them in those terms.

The manner presents at first an appearance of hedging. There are a number of puzzling convolutions, and reservations biting their own tails: when the author talks about himself (which he does a good deal) it is with an air of humility laughably suggesting Richie Moniplies' "very conscious of some small weaknesses—there is no perfection in man." But nothing of any significance is taken back, and there is no change of heart whatever. He refers to the "*américain, catholique et gentilhomme*" pronouncement—I do not mean that, of course, but Mr. Eliot's which is so like it—with mild regret at having said anything so quotable by and to "outsiders"—and goes on to elaborate it very solemnly. He admits the "danger" of using terms like "romantic" and "classic," which "does not, however, give us permission to avoid them altogether"—as though we were under a moral obligation to go on talking about romantic and classical, in defiance of confusion, till the crack of doom. He refers to the alleged disparity between his own poetic practice and his principles, and justifies himself as follows: "I should say that in one's prose reflexions one may be legitimately occupied with ideals, whereas in the writing of verse one can only deal with actuality"—a remark, surely, quite in his best vein.

But to get on to the real subject. He defines tradition as "a way of feeling and acting which characterises a group throughout generations," yet, in spite of this definition, appears to think it not only conceivable but the case that we have none. Though it is "not to be aimed at directly," he has, all through, the air of wanting something done about it, and says it is the business of orthodoxy to supervise, criticise, and "bring it up to date": he talks of searching for a tradition, establishing, reviving one, in a manner that cannot but recall the old joke against an American university—"This tradition will begin on Monday next." And how its presence, when detected, can be of use to the critic appears doubtful, for even then it may be "definitely bad," "trivial," or "out of date." In fact, he is not praising tradition at all, but one particular tradition: why not say so?

Well, he does say so, and then says it is irrelevant: and the same with orthodoxy. His use of the terms must be "kept in mind as not identical" with their theological meaning; it should, he believes, "lead one to dogmatic theology," but he is not "pursuing investigation in that path." Yet in practice he soon makes it clear that he does not want the beliefs of a group at all, but the beliefs of *his* group: no other form of orthodoxy need apply. In other words, you must *start* from dogmatic theology. How you apply it to criticism is not clear: the orthodox need not be good, nor the good orthodox, as he admits: orthodox writers have been very great, and had their faults—and so have others: so what is the use of that standard to a critic? Aesthetically it can be of none. Morally, the case is altered: it might be a good thing to establish a censorship on those lines—a new Index—but what would such a censorship, however admirable, have to do with criticism?

We are, however, given another opportunity of watching Mr. Eliot applying his principles. Charles Lamb once remarked to a schoolmaster that he knew his essays were unmethodical, but could not help it: whereupon "he kindly offered to instruct me in the method by which young gentlemen in *his* seminary were taught to compose English themes." Mr. Eliot, in that situation, would have told him what to say as well. Pleasure and gratitude are excluded from his approach to literature: he is eternally the master with a pile of exercises, prepared, not of course to enjoy them, but to remodel their sentences, correct their sentiments, and send them back to be done over again. This is his judgment on "the late Thomas Hardy": "He seems to me to have written as nearly for the sake of 'self-expression' as a man well can; and the self which he had to express does not strike me as a particularly wholesome or edifying matter of communication. . . . At times his style touches sublimity without ever having passed through the stage of being good." (Oh dear, oh dear!) "He makes a great deal of landscape . . . the scenery dear to the Anglo-Saxon heart." (As though the landscape of the Wessex novels were a mere piece of trumpery decoration.) But his work "represents an interesting example of a powerful personality . . . unhampered by any ideas." Well, perhaps enough of the late Thomas Hardy. Let me give one more example of orthodox criticism:—The creation of character, both in prose and verse, has been suffering from a decay in the sense of sin: men and women "come nearest to being real" in moments of "intense moral struggle, depending on spiritual sanctions," and where, in literature, the struggle is not present, they grow "more and more vaporous"—which no doubt explains why Cleopatra, Mrs. Gamp, Mr. Micawber—to choose quite at random—are so notoriously dim.

But the fact is, as Mr. Eliot himself says, differences of attitude can be so great that there is nothing to argue about—between the friends of happiness and its contemners there is no common ground. It is of no use saying to Mr. Eliot, either as critic or moralist: "Let us enjoy what we do enjoy": he will reply—he actually says in this book—"A spirit of excessive tolerance is to be deprecated." The remark is self-evident, no doubt, as it stands, but it no less indicates an impassable barrier. The enjoyment school will never understand this complacent advocacy of the rack and thumbscrew, this horror of all diversity in opinion, taste, feeling, this old-maidish dislike of "nature boon." Is it the mere love of priesthood and dictatorship, or a kind of spiritual agoraphobia, a blind fear of the complexities of life and thought? "Worm-eaten with liberalism"—in Mr. Eliot's own words—we cannot judge.

A surprise awaits his readers at the end—a little examination paper. It consists of extracts from several contemporary writers, arranged in order of difficulty, and you pick out the heresy. Then, presumably, you send it to Mr. Eliot to correct.

K. JOHN

REMINISCENCES OF D. H. LAWRENCE

D. H. Lawrence: Reminiscences and Correspondence. By EARL and ACHSAH BREWSTER. *Secker*. 10*s*. 6*d*.

During the year 1922, D. H. Lawrence spent several weeks in Ceylon, on a hill-top not far from Kandy. Readers who turn to Mr. Huxley's collected edition of his letters will discover that Buddhism and Lawrence's temperament did not agree. Ceylon, he writes, was "too hot and enervating," though "lovely to look at"; "the East," he told Lady Cynthia Asquith, "is not for me—the sensuous spiritual voluptuousness, the curious sensitiveness of the naked people, their black, bottomless, hopeless eyes—and the heads of elephants and buffaloes poking out of primaeval mud—the queer noise of tall metallic palm trees: *ach!*—altogether the tropics have something of the world before the flood. . . . It makes me feel rather sick." He left for Australia at the beginning of April, relieved to be escaping from Buddha, "his rat-hole temples and his rat-hole religion." A fresh stage of his tormented odyssey was now under way; but the friends at whose suggestion he had visited Kandy and who had attempted to inoculate him with some of the reverence for Eastern religious doctrine that they themselves felt—Mr. Brewster was studying Pali at a Buddhist monastery—were not committed to the same oblivion as their surroundings. He continued to write to them from the ends of the earth and to meet them whenever he was within visiting distance.

Their book is the record of a long friendship. Unlike every other book that has yet been consecrated to Lawrence's memory, bitterness takes no part in its composition. Quarrels are banned; but, since Lawrence was by nature an extremely quarrelsome and "awkward" person, the portrait that emerges gives one the impression of being slightly—ever so slightly—varnished over and toned down. Here is Lawrence in his more agreeable domestic mood. No plates are broken in this narrative; none of those

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furious nerve-storms, that blaze forth from the pages of *Lorenzo in Taos*, interrupt the calm flow of this pleasant story; nor is there the smallest hint that they might have occurred. Lawrence is uniformly kind and gentle. He is frank in his criticism of Mr. Brewster's Buddhist studies; he takes his friends to task on various pretexts; he reproves, he argues—but he never squabbles with them. It was a relationship that seems to have suited him better than most, and, on Lawrence's side, one sometimes feels, it was a trifle avuncular.

For Mr. and Mrs. Brewster were content to admire. Each of them has contributed a chapter of reminiscences; while more than a hundred letters breathe the spirit of Lawrence's strange, extraordinarily vital, incurably restless personality. They are a part of Lawrence and, whatever one's attitude towards his literary achievement, Lawrence as a human being, warm-hearted, spontaneous, full of energy, never ceases to interest and charm. From the point of view of the literary historian, one passage in Mr. and Mrs. Brewster's reminiscences makes a definite and important contribution to our knowledge of the writer's antecedents:

> A workman was arranging a screen on the verandah. . . . Lawrence pensively watched him, announcing that he resembled his father—the same clean-cut and exuberant spirit, a true pagan. He added that he had not done justice to his father in *Sons and Lovers* and felt like re-writing it. When children they had accepted the dictum of their mother that their father was a drunkard, therefore contemptible, but that as Lawrence had grown older he had come to see him in a different light; to see his unquenchable fire and relish for living. Now he blamed his mother for her self-righteousness. . . . She would gather the children in a row and they would sit quaking, waiting for their father to return. . . . At last the father would come in softly . . . hoping to escape unnoticed to bed, but that was never allowed him. . . . She would turn to the whimpering children and ask them if they were not disgusted with such a father. He would look at the row of frightened children, and say: "Never mind, my duckies, you needna' be afraid of me. I'll do ye na harm."

The best in Lawrence, his vitality, his simplicity, his animal gusto, came from the father he was taught to despise; and the worst in his spiritual make-up, from the mother whose adoration haunted his life.

JOHN KEATS

Keats. By B. IFOR EVANS. Great Lives Series. *Duckworth.* 2*s. net.*

The standard of this series may occasionally have tottered, but Mr. Evans's *Keats* will support if not advance it. The Reader in Ordinary, for whom Ben Jonson used to write his discourteous prefaces and for whom this is the first study of *Keats*, will be agreeably instructed; the more objectionable Reader Extraordinary, who is familiar with four or five, is constantly pulled up from, "I know all this," to "I never realised that."

Keats's is a satisfactory life to attempt; there is a wealth of evidence, from friends and doctors as well as from his own poems and letters, little if any of which is conflicting. There was nothing of the crank about Keats, a man combative and sensitive, whose poetical genius drew nourishment from and gave it to every other faculty of his mind. During his medical apprenticeship he advanced as far as to open a temporal artery, and even his lecture notes were kept neatly, occasional drawings of flowers being relegated to the margin. Mr. Evans vividly creates the setting of his life at this period: "Hammond's surgery, pill-boxes, stable-duties, suburban sitting-rooms, the Mathew girls, coy and gamesome, such was the round of his daily life." The lapses of taste in his verse, evidences of that "tendency to class women . . . with roses and sweetmeats," are easily comprehensible, and in any case remarkable for nothing but "vulgarity."

Mr. Evans's treatment of Keats's love for Fanny Brawne—a test where Matthew Arnold so lamentably failed—is probably the best that has been printed, and should prove, once and for all, the wisdom of assembling facts before running amok through pity or prudery. Its progress, with the accompanying progress of bodily disease, falls genuinely into three stages—recognition, withdrawal and surrender—and, as genuinely, the first result of this love is "that he sustains the most consistent period of poetic creation ever endured by a poet of his years, and with verses as calm and mature as he ever produced." The experience, that is to say, did not dominate but animated his mind, driving it on to wrestle with and resolve the problems that are expressed in the Odes and *Lamia*.

Keats had none of Shelley's flaming political sympathies; intercourse with Hunt, however, confirmed his naturally Radical instincts, and Mr. Evans reminds one how they reappear, not as detached theories, but fundamentally in his Poetry. Dim memories of *Annus Mirabilis* and of some books of travel may have affected the details, but the matter of the brothers' guilt is so much Keats's own that he apologises to Boccaccio for introducing it. This realism—

> And for them many a weary hand did swelt
> In torched mines and noisy factories
> * * *
> Half-ignorant, they turn'd an easy wheel,
> That set sharp racks at work, to pinch and peel,—

breaking the unity of atmosphere in *Isabella*, helps to emphasise the mawkishness of the rest of the poem. And the most generalised expression of the spirit of the age of revolution is found in "Hyperion" as Keats figures forth the progress of the universe. It is not easy, however, to agree with Mr. Evans's further suggestion about "Hyperion," backed though it be by the authority of W. P. Ker: the poem as it stands, even if the conclusion in the Woodhouse transcript be accepted, is not a finished work. It may well be that Keats would have found it difficult to add anything more, but he certainly had the original intention of doing so.

Since Keats was writing poetry with an inspiration that set his whole mind in action, one wishes that Mr. Evans had suggested the successful care which he gave to his craftmanship. Reading how Madeline

> Unclasps her warmed jewels one by one;
> Loosens her fragrant bodice:

we are in danger of passing heedlessly by the fullness of the meaning in every word; in fact, to follow the stages through which these epithets emerged is to advance along some of the most thrilling tracks that the working imagination has left for us to see. For such an exposition, the reader would have foregone the considerations of Keats's imagery and subsequent influence that, being necessarily brief, are incomplete and even flimsy. Finally, I would make a moderate plea for a fairer consideration of Haydon, whose gifts as a painter Mr. Evans summarises as "a crude and mediocre talent that resulted in the vast acreage of his historical canvases." His *Punch and Judy* at least, which is now at Burlington House, and usually accessible at the Tate, is more lively and at the same time more temperately composed than such general comments would lead one to expect. E. B. STURGIS

THE JESUITS AND THE POPISH PLOT

The Jesuits and the Popish Plot. By MALCOLM V. HAY. *Kegan Paul.* 10*s.* 6*d. net.*

Let no one be misled by the alluring claim on the dust-cover that this book is "the first intelligible study of Titus Oates and the Popish Plot, based on new material." There is very little in it about Titus Oates and not much about the Plot, and such new material as the author produces is of small interest and of but little relevance. Nor is there any discernible ground for the author's own claim that his book "follows approximately the necessary procedure of the detective who presents his case: the *dramatis personae*, the crime, the clue and the summing up against the accused parties." On the contrary, we get a disorderly presentation of much diligent research and a wonderful will-to-believe. Major Hay has already written a book to prove that the history of Scotland is quite different from what it is generally supposed to be, this owing to the fact that the accepted historians have all been Whigs and Presbyterians, whose incurable propensity for lying distinguishes them clearly from all other historians. Now, *majora canens*, he opens an attack on the sophistication of English history by such authors as Hallam, Macaulay, Professor Trevelyan and, in especial, Mr. Pollock, whom Major Hay never mentions save in terms of Vatinian hatred. All, he suggests, have failed to see the inwardness of the Popish Plot episode and have been grossly unfair to the Catholic Church. Here, one would suppose, was about the worst possible ground on which to impugn the fairness of Protestant historians, but Major Hay is very determined about it. What his grievance consists in is not clear, but as far as one can make out, it is, like the state of unregenerate man, fourfold. First, that Protestant historians, unlike Catholic ones, sometimes make mistakes, such as saying that Edward Coleman was a priest, whereas he was a layman. *Item*, that they show no intimate knowledge of the childish intrigues and personal feuds and squabbles by which English Catholicism was divided during the seventeenth century. *Item*, that they speak disrespectfully

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of the Society of Jesus. *Item*, that they represent Oates and Tonge as the authors of the Popish Plot myth, whereas its true begetter was the Rev. John Sergeant, D.D., and Oates and Tonge were only subordinate rogues who nursed his foul offspring to maturity.

To this last point Major Hay attaches enormous importance; though what difference, earthly or otherwise, the proof of it would make he does not tell us. Sergeant is one of the shadowy shapes that flit through the obscurities of the politico-religious intrigues of the period. He has generally been held fairly respectable. Burnet (whose praise, to be sure, is not necessarily a recommendation) characteristically describes him as "a good and sincere man, though indiscreet." He was the acknowledged spokesman of the "Black Coists," or anti-Jesuit faction of English Catholics, who worked for a *modus vivendi* between England and the Holy See on the basis that the latter should abate its pretension to temporal supremacy, which was the sole obstacle to toleration so far as England was concerned. He did his task with zeal and ability, but ultimately the Jesuits, those sons of Zeruiah, prevailed against him, and in his discomfiture he was betrayed into courses that justified the prudent Scotsman's censure of him as "indiscreet." With another secular priest, Morris by name, he came over from Holland to testify before the Priory Council to the abominable ways of the Jesuits. All this worthy couple had to tell was a paltry scrap of hearsay, but it was good enough for the times. Subsequently Sergeant was regularly employed by Shaftesbury as an anti-Jesuit agent, for which he was for some years extremely well paid and enjoyed a conspicuous immunity from the penal laws. But, beyond the fact that his name appears on the same pay-roll, there is nothing to connect him with Oates. Even Major Hay is constrained to admit that he cannot put the case higher than a probability; and to get even a probability he has to assume that three curious anonymous documents are all the work of Sergeant.

One closes the book with a lively feeling of sympathy for the Devil when he sheared the pig. DONALD CARSWELL

THE BUCHMANITES

Oxford and the Groups. By Rev. G. F. ALLEN and others. Edited by R. H. S. CROSSMAN. *Blackwell*. 5s.

I Was a Pagan. By V. C. KITCHEN. *Hodder & Stoughton*. 5s.

The first of these two is by far the best book that has yet appeared about the Buchmanites. In it they are most ably defended by the Rev. G. F. Allen and by Professor Grensted, and constructively criticised by nine other writers from as many different points of view. It would be invidious to single out any one of these contributions for special praise; it is enough to say that every one of these essays repays careful reading. The Editor, Mr. Crossman, and the publisher, Mr. Basil Blackwell, deserve our congratulations for producing so fair and full a statement of the pros and cons of the Buchmanite movement.

"Happiness, like coke, is a by-product," and undoubtedly a great many people have found in this movement the happiness that comes with a sense of purpose and devotion to a cause. It is noteworthy that not one of the writers directly denies this, or even makes as fierce a frontal attack on the Buchmanites as did Mr. Jay in *The New Oxford Outlook*. But we have to consider "the harm that good men do" as well as the good, and the question is that of the proportion of good to harm.

The points of criticism of the Buchmanites are many and various, but it is worth while to recapitulate some of them, while remembering that there is no criticism made here which could not be substantiated with chapter and verse from this excellent book. There are to be found among Buchmanites extraordinarily large elements of triviality, snobbishness, morbidity, contempt for reason and intelligence, and "rugged individualism." No honest observer who has ever been to a meeting for "sharing" can be unaware of the element of triviality. As to snobbishness, there is far more rejoicing over one Countess or one Blue who has been "changed" than over ninety-nine more ordinary people.

But these two are in themselves the more trivial points of criticism. A much more serious matter is emphasised over and over again in this book by different writers in different ways. This is the grave danger attendant upon the Buchmanites' present practice of "guidance" and "sharing." It is not good for a man always to be holding a spiritual thermometer in his mouth, and constantly to be talking about himself in public. The need for some sort of purge of the mind is widespread among humanity; but the process usually requires the careful supervision of an expert. By "rugged individualism" is meant not only the financial mysteries of the Buchmanite movement and the fact that it is one which appeals principally to the middle classes, but also the fact that its members as yet appear not even to recognise the existence of social and political problems.

It is impossible in so short a space to do more than thus indicate certain outstanding features of this movement, and then refer the reader to *Oxford and the Groups* if he wishes fully to understand the importance of a very important phenomenon. But one detached point must be taken here, and has indeed already by implication been taken, and that is the question of name. It is most certainly far below the standard of "absolute honesty" to attach the enormous advertising value of the word "Oxford" to a movement whose leader is an American, and whose adherents in Oxford itself by common consent are a small and totally unrepresentative minority.

It is no defence to say, as Mr. Allen says, that the name of "Oxford Group" was first given to the movement by onlookers. It is up to its members to prove at any rate their intellectual honesty by insisting on being called by some other name.

What is likely to be the future of this movement? It is fairly safe to prophesy that it will soon cease to grow in Oxford itself, if indeed it has not already so ceased, but will grow with great rapidity in the world outside Oxford. During the war the churches signally failed to seize a great opportunity for the furtherance of their work, but a religious revival was always to be expected amid the disillusionment of the post-war years. Then came the great depression, which made it certain, though it was not to be anticipated that it would take this particular form. Mr. Allen's interesting historical survey makes it clear that though the Buchmanite movement existed before the slump, its real increase dates from after 1929. Similarly since then in politics Liberalism has been giving place to Fascism and Communism. The Buchmanite movement is far more likely to be the ally of the former than the latter.

It remains to be seen whether in this process of expansion there will be a collision with the Church. It is suggested by one of the writers that such a collision might occur on account of a conflict between the "check," i.e., collective guidance of the Group and the authority of the Church, or on account of a conflict between its doctrines and that of the Buchmanites, if they ever did in any way attempt to rationalise their teaching. But whether through conscious wisdom or through mere indifference the Church on the whole seems unlikely to make the same mistake about the Buchmanites as it did about the Wesleyans. Those, by the way, who are interested in the parallelisms to be found in the history of religious revivalism would find it highly instructive to turn from this book to, say, Mr. James Laver's admirable little *Life of Wesley*.

It is possible also to imagine the emergence of some neo-Buchmanite movement. If its leader were not only steeped in the mystical experience which is the essence of religion, but were able to combine with this gift those of a commanding intellect and an understanding of social problems, his followers would be far more of a force to be reckoned with by the hostile and the indifferent than are the Buchmanites. They have, after all, probably succeeded in making almost as many atheists as Christians.

It is unfortunate for Mr. Kitchen that his book should have appeared at the same time as Mr. Crossman's. *I Was a Pagan* is of the low quality of *For Sinners Only*; its very title is characteristic of a typical Buchmanite fault, egotistical self-satisfaction. Any one who wants to read an informative, well-balanced and stimulating study of the Buchmanites will be well-advised not to pay too much attention to Mr. Kitchen, but to pay a lot to *Oxford and the Groups*. FRANK HARDIE

SHORTER NOTICES

The People's Year Book. *Co-operative Wholesale Society*. 3s. 6d.

This hardy annual of the Co-operative movement makes its seventeenth appearance, and it maintains the high quality of its predecessors. It is as usual a mine of information, and at the present moment it will have an extra interest in view of the campaign which is being conducted against the co-operators. Many of its critics know little of the aims and the achievements and the strength of the movement; they would do well to study the facts and figures given in this Year Book. In 1932 (the latest year for which complete statistics are available) more than half the families in the country belonged to co-operative societies—the total membership

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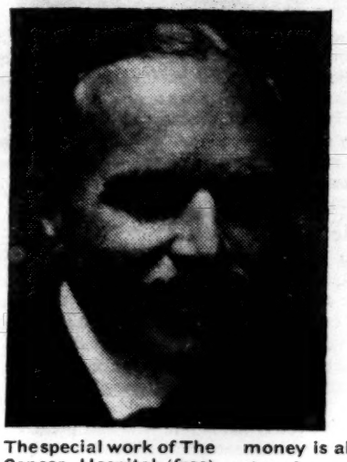

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MINISTRY OF HEALTH STATISTICS

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Week-end Competitions

No. 206

Set by Norman Collins

It is assumed that the Codex Sinaiticus has been acquired by one of our more enterprising publishers, and has promptly been "chosen" by the Book Society. We offer a first prize of Two Guineas, and a second prize of Half a Guinea for the best advertisement with suitable quotations from Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, Lady Houston, Dean Inge, a "well-known West-End bookseller," Dr. Buchman, and the Greek Archimandrite.

RULES—

1. Envelopes should be marked with the number of the Problem, in the top left-hand corner, and should be addressed to COMPETITIONS, 10 Great Queen St., W.C.2. Solutions must reach the Editor by first post on Friday, March 2nd.

2. Competitors may use a pseudonym. Typescript is not insisted on, but writing must be on one side of the paper only.

3. The Editor's decision is final. He reserves the right to print in part or as a whole any matter sent in, whether it be awarded a prize or not. MSS. cannot be returned. When no entries reach the required standard no prize will be awarded.

4. No competitor is eligible for more than one prize in any one week.

The results of last week's competition will be announced in our next issue.

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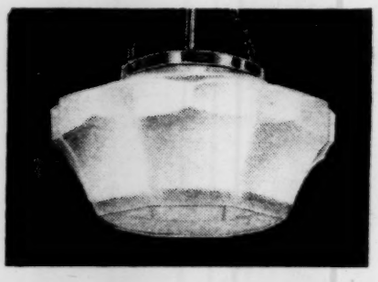

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RESULT OF COMPETITION 204

Set by Gerald Bullett

If the Nazi persecution of the Jews and the de-judaising of Jesus Christ had happened in the time of Dr. Johnson, Boswell would certainly have wheedled from his illustrious friend a pronouncement on the subject. For the best hypothetical passage from the *Life*, recording such a dialogue (among other things: i.e., in a plausible setting), we offer a First Prize of Two Guineas and a Second Prize of Half a Guinea. No entry should exceed 300 words. Since we are playing with history, there is no reason why Lord Chesterfield and Voltaire should not be of the party; but any others present must be people whom Johnson is recorded to have met.

Report by Gerald Bullett

A reasonably high standard of wit and intelligence was reached in the great majority of entries, but only a few competitors seriously attempted to imitate Boswell's style or to make Johnson and the others talk in character. Many were content to father their own quite respectable epigrams on Johnson, without regard to whether they had a Johnsonian flavour or expressed a (probable) Johnsonian point of view. But several happy things (apart from the prize-winning entries) have occurred in the course of this competition. Joan Jukes gives Voltaire a pleasant remark: "A patriotic ruler, sir, is one who can point to an enemy. If no enemy exists he must invent one. The Jews are most suitable. They have no tanks or bombing planes." This competitor's Boswell adds: "Mr. Johnson appeared not to notice this observation." Other highly commendable entries are those of A. H. Ellerington and H. C. M., and those of William Bliss and T. E. Casson contain good passages. Easily best of all, however, is Anthony Linell's; and Non Omnia's is a good second.

FIRST PRIZE

On Wednesday, February 21st, Johnson and I supped at Streatham, where Mrs. Thrale was entertaining the celebrated M. de Voltaire and a large company. Dr. Johnson's spirits were low, and, during the course of supper, he refused to speak a word. But I was resolved, at the risque of incurring his anger, to induce him to enter into the conversation. I, therefore, directed myself to Mr. Burke, who was seated across the table, and said: Do you not agree, sir, that we are greatly indebted to Lady H——* for her pamphlet upon the State of Germany?

JOHNSON: We are indebted to no man or woman for cant. She applauds incendiarism and gun-fire as she would applaud a display of pyrotechnicks at the Vauxhall Gardens; she advocates persecution with the oratory of a Jesuit, and massacre with the enthusiasm of a female Hottentot. I do not say she is a *bad* woman, but, sir, she has no understanding. GOLDSMITH: Her knowledge of detail is prodigious. JOHNSON: Sir, extensive information does not constitute understanding. There are principles no less of religion than of humanity of which the lady in question is wholly ignorant. M. DE VOLTAIRE smiled and said in a low voice, so that Johnson should not hear him: Sa pudeur anglaise la fait ignorer la circoncision de son Dieu tutelaire.

Mrs. Thrale, who had been carrying on an animated conversation with Mrs. Montagu, then remarked that her heart bled for the Jews' distress. Whereupon, the Author of the Rambler rolled himself about in his chair, and, staring angrily at the two ladies, replied in a loud tone: *Your* heart does not bleed, madam. Contemplation of alien oppression does not cause *you* to lie sleepless one minute the longer, or to consume one sugar-plum the less. Let us hear no more of bleeding hearts.

ANTHONY LINELL

SECOND PRIZE

I called with Lord Chesterfield and Monsieur Voltaire to enlist Dr. Johnson's support for the Jewish men of learning who had been driven from Germany by the Nazi persecution. He received us courteously and listened quietly, while I set forth the injuries these men had suffered; then: Yes, sir, I will contribute to your funds. I wished him to express himself more emphatically. B.: Do you then, sir, approve of the principle of persecution? J.: Perhaps, sir, the Jews in Germany are not more popular than the Scotch in England. LORD CHESTERFIELD: As a member of the *Corps Diplomatique*, I should welcome a pronouncement by Dr. Johnson on this subject. M. VOLTAIRE: For my part I find it amusing, this idea of editing the Scriptures. Myself, I should not refuse the opportunity. J. (controlling himself): The roll of French prophets, sir, begins, I believe, with Rabelais. LORD C.: Nay, sir, there is no intention to compare the sparkling French genius with the sublimity of the Hebrew prophets. J.: I hope not, sir. B.: But do not the Germans endeavour to maintain that our Lord was not of the Jewish race? J.: Sir, they are farmers who empty their dung carts down their own wells. B.: Perhaps this is but the temporary ebullience of fanaticism. J.: Nay, sir, we were told that Germany contained men of learning and religion. They make no sign. (Sadly) They must suffer a fearful laceration of the mind. MON. V.: To the philosopher this is but one more instance of men creating God in their own image. J.: Sir, human presumption is never amusing. Let us allow some to be "magis Christiani quam philosophi." B.: The German autocrat, then ——. J. (interrupting): No more, sir. It is not within the power of any autocrat to shut the gates of mercy on mankind.

NON OMNIA

* Lady Hailes, second wife of Sir David Dalrymple, Lord Hailes.

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CALIBAN'S PROBLEM CONTEST

PROBLEM 61.—PRIVATE WIRE.

A state of extreme tension exists between Utterland and Depravia. Schwindelstein, who is engaged in the manipulation of Depravian stock, is anxious to know whether war is likely to be declared. His agent in Floozleville, the capital of Depravia, sends him the following wire:

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VGTZ BRMGS MGS LMPR,
RIY LIPDI MCCTPYB RV BYWYG
VFR VN YPEIR.
GVJ HYBBMEY MFRIYGRPDPRZ
DMG DTMPH
LIPDI SVYB GVR UYMJ MGS
HVGXYZ CFKKTYJ'B GMHY.

This is followed twenty-four hours later by another:

R L H R U	M C A I M	V L M J Y
F P J G P	R M M B B	S X T R D
D R P Y Y	T T M Y M	B D Z U Y
J V G V T	Y Y B P X	V G M Q L
I M M R T	J C M P B	J I Z Y Y
J C M M Y	M S D H B	Z F J B R
R V J B D	B C V B G	Y L M C V
S L X M M	J V V M M	Y S P P V
N Z J Z Z	R M N O O	

Is it peace or war?

PROBLEM 60.—TETRAHEDRAL.

"4 to 16" should, of course, have read "7 to 13." This does not affect the statement of the problem, and I hope has not misled anyone.

PROBLEM 59.—JUST AN AVERAGE PROBLEM.

Solution.

First consider the situation at the head of the league table.

Goals against A and B differ by one, and each must be very much less than 120. Suppose they are 51 and 50 respectively. If A has scored "a" goals and B "b" goals,

$$\frac{a}{51} - \frac{b}{50} \text{ must be a minimum.}$$

This will be so if $50a - 51b = 1$

i.e. $a = 50$ or 101 or — —
$b = 49$ or 99 or — —

The only values possible under the conditions are:

$a = 101 \quad b = 99.$

The goal averages of 101 — 51 and 99 — 50 will have a difference of only $\frac{1}{51 \times 50}$, but if we can have the "goals against" more than 51 and 50, we should get a smaller difference still, and a few trials will soon show that if A's goal average is 119 — 60
and B's " " 117 — 59
we have the smallest difference possible, $\left(\frac{1}{60 \times 59}\right)$ if the "goals for" do not exceed 120. Even if A concedes 59 goals and B 60, the "goals for" have to be 119 and 121 respectively, which is inadmissible.

Now, considering Maddersborough and Northcastle Rovers at the foot of the league table, we know that N scored 58 goals (2 fewer than A conceded) and as their average is more adverse than A's is favourable, N's goals against must be something between 116 and 120.

If the difference between M's goal average and N's is to be as small as possible, the "goals against" must be as large as possible. They must also be prime to one another and the only such numbers between 116 and 120 are 117 and 119.

Thus, if M and N score m and n goals respectively, either $\frac{m}{117} - \frac{n}{119}$ is minimum or $\frac{m}{119} - \frac{n}{117}$ is minimum.

i.e. $119m - 117n = 1$ or $117m - 119n = 1$

$\therefore \quad m = 59, \; n = 60$ or $m = 59, \; n = 58$

as these are the only solutions compatible with the conditions.

Since we have already found that $n = 58$, the second solution is the one required and M's average is 59 — 119
and N's " 58 — 117,
the difference being only $\frac{1}{119 \times 117}$, or about .00007.

We have now found all the goal figures as follows:

	For.	Against.
Ascot Villa	119	60
Brightsmouth	117	59
Maddersborough ..	59	119
Northcastle Rovers ..	58	117

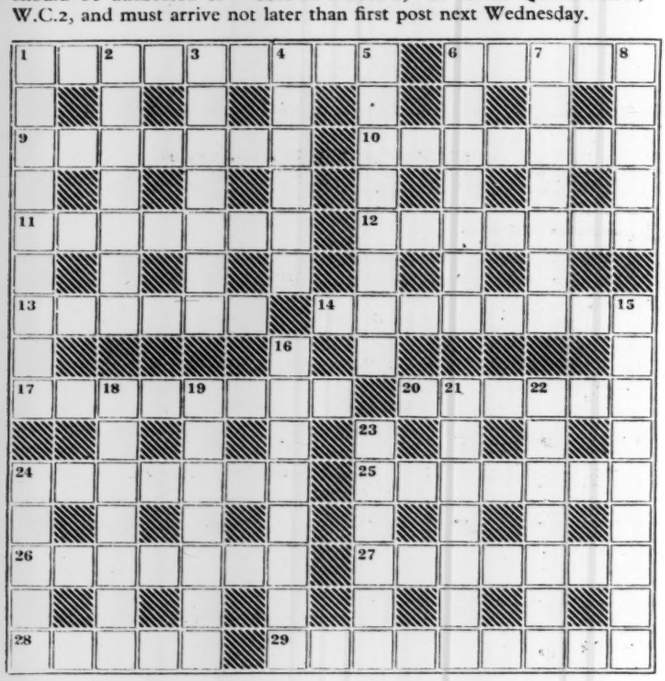
PROBLEM 58.—FIVE CARD TRICK.

A set of Low's Cartoons goes to: G. Rittener, Laneside, Netheroyd Hill, Huddersfield.

Eight points are awarded.

WEEK-END CROSSWORD 207

The sender of the first correct solution to be opened may choose as prize a copy of either *This England* or *The Playtime Omnibus*. Envelopes should be addressed to "CROSSWORDS," 10 Great Queen Street, W.C.2, and must arrive not later than first post next Wednesday.



Set by L.-S.

LAST WEEK'S WINNER

The winner of last week's crossword is Mrs. M. C. Holloway, 7, Dora Road, Small Heath, Birmingham.

ACROSS

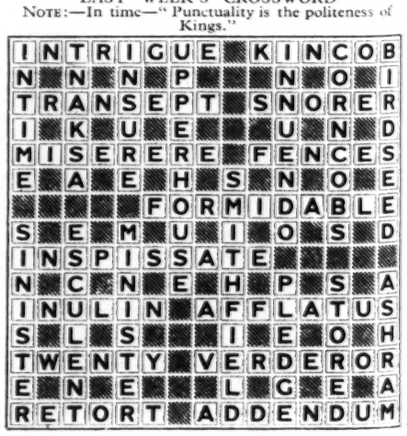
1. As you were!
6. Colour a Cockney would call an English estuary.
9. Spirited premonitor of death.
10. Put me with the lambs.
11. Upside down botanically?
12. A composer led about.
13. Existing part of a card trick.
14. Often not the capital production it used to be.
17. Where the captain Antonio considered it best to lodge.
20. The fortune teller would have it silver crossed.
24. Where the Union Jack is never lowered.
25. These birds seem to need outsize quarries.
26. The officer who joins up.
27. A climbing disability.
28. They tell you there isn't one to a one-way street.
29. The first at 2 often is.

DOWN

1. Cases where comment is risky.
2. Place of sweeping excitement suggesting a Scotsman's lineage.
3. One of these and some cord will make a crowfoot.
4. Quite easy without a tie.
5. Complete opposite of submarine.
6. Shady offence.
7. Nice adjustment in a sheet.
8. Dares to be levelled.
15. This bird ensures that the stone shall gather no moss.
16. Interwoven.
18. Singing is plainly essential if you would charm like a siren.
19. It should be politic to grow this in your garden.
21. You should buy twice as much for a penny.
22. Poetically never say die internally.
23. Slight reconstruction at the end of an art gallery allows the smoke to go out.
24. The masculine French about to be sick.

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD

NOTE:—In time—"Punctuality is the politeness of Kings."


INTRIGUE KINCOB
N N N P N O I
TRANSEPT SNORER
I K U E U N D
MISERERE FENCES
E A E H S N O E
FORMIDABLE
S E M U I O S D
INSPISSATE
N C N E H P S A
INULIN AFFLATUS
S L S I E O H
TWENTY VERDEROR
E N E L G E A
RETORT ADDENDUM

PEARL

ASSURANCE COMPANY LTD.

HIGH HOLBORN, LONDON, W.C.1.

SUMMARY OF THE SEVENTIETH ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31ST DECEMBER, 1933.

INCOME.

LIFE BRANCHES. Premium Income £12,462,153

FIRE AND ACCIDENT BRANCHES. Premium Income £1,034,835

TOTAL INCOME £16,973,090

CLAIMS.

LIFE BRANCHES. The Life Claims and Matured Endowments paid and outstanding numbered 337,688 and amounted with Bonuses to £6,175,064

FIRE AND ACCIDENT BRANCHES. Claims paid and outstanding amounted to £461,418

TOTAL CLAIMS PAID £84,993,843

FUNDS.

INCREASE IN FUNDS £5,249,968

TOTAL FUNDS £78,670,005

BONUS.

ORDINARY BRANCH. A simple Reversionary Bonus has been declared on Pearl Policies entitled to participate in full profits at the rate of .. .. £2-0-0 per cent.

INDUSTRIAL BRANCH. To provide Reversionary Bonuses on Policies, with certain exceptions, effected before 1st January, 1927, a sum has been set aside amounting to £572,585

GEORGE TILLEY,
Chairman.

WRITE FOR PARTICULARS OF

CAPITAL & GUARANTEED INCOME
FOR DEPENDENTS

AT MINIMUM COST

PROVIDENT MUTUAL LIFE ASSURANCE ASSOCIATION

25-31, MOORGATE,

LONDON, E.C.2

Telephone :
Metropolitan 8014 (5 *lines*)

C. R. V. COUTTS
Manager and Actuary

THE WEEK IN THE CITY

MR. KEYNES AND 2½ PER CENT.—THE FRANC, ETC.—HOME RAILS AND TILLING

At the annual general meeting this week of the National Mutual Life Assurance Society (which, incidentally, has enjoyed an appreciation of 25 per cent. on its mean holding of Stock Exchange securities in the last two years) Mr. J. M. Keynes advanced some fundamental reasons for expecting a further fall in the long-term rate of interest. The old argument that long-term British Government securities must fall in price as soon as there is a material trade demand for bank advances no longer holds good. In the first place, the resources of the joint stock banks depend at least as much on changes in the volume of securities purchased by the Bank of England as on changes in the Bank's stock of gold. In the second place, part of the clearing banks' existing advances represents frozen rather than active credit, and the increased demands for current credit will be partly met by the repayment of the old advances. Moreover, some of the largest industrial concerns in the country are now much less dependent upon bank borrowing than was the case of the constituent businesses out of which they have been formed. Mr. Keynes estimated that an increase of, say, £20 millions in the Bank of England's assets would enable the clearing banks to increase their advances by 25 per cent., which should be fully adequate for trade requirements except in the event of a large rise in wages and other costs. Mr. Keynes concluded that there was no necessity for a trade revival to break the gilt-edged market unless the authorities desired this unpleasantness to happen. And he went on to advance good reasons why the authorities should desire the contrary. The present yield of nearly 3½ per cent. on long-term gilt-edged stocks is, in his view, far above the "equilibrium" level, meaning by "equilibrium" the rate compatible with the full employment of our resources of men and of equipment. The average yield on Consols was under 3 per cent. for the forty years ending in 1914. During the nineteenth century, the annual amount which the community was disposed to save when it was fully employed was much below what it is to-day, whereas the outlets for profitable investment were then far greater. Thus, Mr. Keynes argued, if Great Britain and the United States were to return to the full employment of their resources they would have sums so vast that they could not be invested to yield anything approaching 3½ per cent. It is Mr. Keynes' opinion that the equilibrium rate is probably not above 2½ per cent. for long-term gilt-edged investment and may be appreciably less. If he is right, the National Mutual will enjoy an appreciation of £648,000 or 40 per cent. on its holdings of British Government securities. We do not, of course, suggest that Mr. Keynes was talking his "book," but we doubt whether capitalist society, operating under conditions of greater political risk to-day than in the nineteenth century, will ever enjoy a 2½ per cent. millenium.

* * *

The weekly puzzle competition for investors—When is a gold standard not a gold standard? The following passage is quoted from an American investment service: "The gold bloc is already off the gold standard. Holland permits exports of the metal only to other gold countries, Belgium has a complicated system of restrictions and Switzerland is under no general commitment to sell gold. (*Note.*—Switzerland has now practically exhausted its gold exchange reserve.) The outlook is that within a week gold will be unobtainable from any central bank in Europe except under special licence, which licences will be given only in settlement of legitimate trade balances." It is difficult to believe that the gold bloc will attempt to kill the first revival in international trade by imposing the drastic exchange restrictions of bankrupt debtor countries. But some action will have to be taken by France in the near future—either devaluation or deflation. As the logical end of deflation at this juncture is machine guns in the street, even a weak Government must turn to devaluation as the line of least resistance. After all, devaluation is a painless internal operation which does not require even a political anaesthetic.

* * *

In our issue of January 13th we suggested that the dividends on home railway stocks would disappoint the market. This was the case with the London and North Eastern which paid 2 per cent. on its 4 per cent. 1st preference stock (against a market estimate of 3 per cent.), transferring a small amount from reserves to do so, and to some extent with London Midland and Scottish, which paid 3½ per cent. on its 4 per cent. 1st preference stock against a market estimate of 4 per cent. Nor was it any encouragement to the market that the directors of the Great Western, with their heads still in the clouds, should maintain a dividend of 3 per cent. on the ordinary stock by withdrawing £1,350,000 from reserves. The cause of the London and North Eastern disappointment was an increase in expenditures in the second half of 1933. Apparently 44 per cent. of its traffic increase was eaten up by higher expenses—a much bigger proportion than on the other railways. Possibly the London and North Eastern is making good some arrears of maintenance which were allowed to pile up during the slump. The Southern, however, saved the home railway market from disgrace by paying 3 per cent. on its 5 per cent. preferred ordinary stock against a market estimate of 2½ per cent. This is a very creditable result and indicates that the Company has more than made good the decline in Continental traffic by developing its electrified suburban services and summer tourism.

* * *

We remain "bullish" of the London Midland and Scottish 1923 preference stock at 52. As a result of the dividend announcements, speculative investors have been exchanging from London Midland and Scottish ordinary stock at 25¼ into Southern deferred ordinary stock at 23½. In order to pay a dividend on its ordinary stock, the London Midland and Scottish must earn the balance of its 4 per cent. and 5 per cent. preference dividends and the whole of its 1923 4 per cent. preference dividend, totalling £2,200,868, while the Southern has only to earn another 2 per cent. (£551,732) on its preferred ordinary stock before resuming dividends on its deferred stock. Expressing it in percentages, the 1933 receipts of the London Midland and Scottish must increase by 21.7 per cent. and those of the Southern by 11.8 per cent. before dividends on their ordinary and deferred ordinary stocks, respectively, are resumed. This, however, is just the short view. For the long view, the London Midland and Scottish should be able to earn more on its ordinary stock than the Southern can ever earn on its deferred stock. The London Midland and Scottish has some bad patches on its system—for example, Lancashire, the Irish trade and the Clyde—which can be cleared up by a trade revival. In 1924 the London Midland and Scottish earned 5.7 per cent. on its ordinary stock and the Southern only 2.9 per cent. on its deferred. The progressive "come-up-and-see-me" advertising of Sir Josiah Stamp and Mr. Ashton Davies encourages us to view the future of London Midland and Scottish with optimism. It is surprising what Mae West has done for British railway directors.

* * *

Motor transport beat the railways in market traffic this week. Thomas Tilling ordinary shares have jumped in the past ten days from 83*s.* to 95*s.* 3*d.* The Company is merely maintaining its dividend of 15 per cent. and shows earnings of 27.4 per cent., as against 26.6 per cent. in the previous year. The cause of the excitement is the Company's statement that it is impossible to present a balance-sheet which would represent an accurate view of the state of the Company's affairs on December 31st, 1933, as the arbitration tribunal has not yet given judgment on the Company's claim for compensation on the transfer of its London buses to the London Passenger Transport Board. The Company claimed £3,595,543 in equal amounts of "A," "B" and "C" stock, together with a cash payment of £173,501. If this claim were granted, Thomas Tilling would receive stocks worth at present market prices about £3,937,000. Even if the whole of this stock were distributed to the ordinary shareholders, the break-up value of the ordinary shares on the last balance-sheet showing would rise to only 83*s.* 4½*d.* But the whole of the claim is not likely to be granted by the arbitration tribunal. If half of it were allowed the break-up value of the ordinary shares would be under 60*s.* No doubt Thomas Tilling on an earnings' yield basis are worth their present figure of 95*s.* 3*d.* The Company's earnings are always conservatively arrived at and last year it took credit for only nine months' profits from the London buses transferred to the London Passenger Transport Board. Moreover, it is a holding company and presumably takes into its trading account only the dividends received from its subsidiary and associated companies. What the earnings of Thomas Tilling ordinary shares amount to is unascertainable, but they are certainly much more than the 27½ per cent. ostensibly shown in the trading account. At 95*s.* 3*d.* the shares return a dividend yield of only £3 3*s.* per cent.

COMPANY MEETING

NATIONAL MUTUAL LIFE ASSURANCE SOCIETY

MR. J. M. KEYNES' ADDRESS.

The Annual General Meeting of the National Mutual Life Assurance Society was held on Wednesday last at 39, King Street, E.C.2. Mr. J. M. Keynes, C.B., Chairman of the Society, said:—

Our net new business of £700,935, showing the substantial increase of 30 per cent. on the previous year, bears out, I think, the hope which I expressed at our meeting a year ago that the abnormal conditions which were adversely affecting us had come to an end. This year's business has been well spread among the various classes of assurance, and the Society's new schemes have received a good measure of support. This is particularly the case with our house purchase scheme, introduced about eighteen months ago in conjunction with the Burnley Building Society. The "All Clear" Income policy providing for the payment of the capital sum assured by annual instalments free of income tax, which was introduced in the course of last year, has also met with a satisfactory response.

The Chairman then dealt with various items in the report, saying that the policies surrendered during the year had fallen very considerably, and that the expenses also showed a reduction. He was pleased to report a satisfactory result of the current valuation of stock exchange securities, and other investments, appreciation in 1933 being £363,963, equal to 6.6 per cent. of the total mean funds, and to 8.3 per cent. of the stock exchange securities. Taking the years 1932 and 1933 together, the aggregate appreciation had amounted to more than £1,000,000. The Chairman then referred to the creation of a reserve fund out of surplus resources, to which the sum of £250,000 had been transferred, saying that the Board had been influenced to create this separate fund owing to the undesirability of including large temporary fluctuations in capital values in a revenue account primarily intended to show the result of current trading operations. The Chairman said that the rate of interest the Society was now able to earn on their investments had declined during the past year from £4 5s. 8d. per cent. to £4 1s. 10d. per cent. Continuing, he said: The decline of the net rate of interest which we are able to earn on the investment of new money to a figure not much in excess of 4 per cent. raises, however, questions of the greatest possible importance and interest to all investment institutions and not least to insurance offices, and I should like to take this opportunity of considering the general problem which this phenomenon presents in a little more detail.

In 1932 long-term British Government securities moved from a five per cent. to a three and a half per cent. basis. This was largely the result of the steps taken by the Bank of England to facilitate the conversion of the War Loan, including open-market operations on an unprecedentedly large scale which raised the resources of the London clearing banks by £246,000,000, out of which they invested £176,000,000 in British Government securities.

In 1933 Government securities marked time, improving in price by only some two per cent., and the year was occupied by other fixed-interest securities rising to their usual parity with Government securities and in some cases beyond it. This was in spite of a further increase of £93,000,000 in the investments held by the banks—no longer out of additional resources provided by the Bank of England, but through the shrinkage of their other assets. Meanwhile, the Treasury Bill rate has averaged less than 1 per cent., and for more than a year there has been a spread of 2½ per cent. between the yield on long-term Government securities and the rate at which the Money Market has been able to borrow against them. This abnormal and anomalous relationship indicates a grave doubt in the mind of the market as to whether the existing price of long-term securities will be maintained.

Two views can be held. Those who are afraid of holding long-term securities point out with truth that the rise in their prices is largely due to the purchases of the banks; and they invoke, again with truth, the evidence of past experience to the effect that, as trade recovers, the banks have been accustomed to sell their investments to provide the means for increased advances to industry. They argue, therefore, believing that history will repeat itself, that long-term Government securities will fall in price as soon as there is a material improvement in the demand for advances. It would be rash to affirm that the course of events will be different this time. But I would like to give some grounds for this conclusion, before passing to what seem to me to be more fundamental reasons for expecting a further fall in the long-term rate of interest.

In pre-war days the resources of the banking system were somewhat rigidly linked to the gold reserves of the Bank of England. Open-market operations were unimportant and, broadly speaking, the assets of the clearing banks went up and down according as gold was moving into, or out of, the Bank of England. Now in times of good trade this country tended to expand, and in bad times to contract, its foreign lending more rapidly than its favourable balance; the effect of which on movements of gold was to prevent the assets of the banks from increasing in good times, whilst sometimes the tendency for these assets to increase was actually stronger in times of depression. It is not to be wondered at, therefore, that with improving trade it was often impracticable for the banks to accommodate industry except by selling their investments. This is the historical origin of the expectation that Consols will fall when trade recovers.

To-day, however, there is no necessity for events to follow this course. The resources of the banks depend at least as much on changes in the volume of securities purchased by the Bank of England as on changes in the Bank's stock of gold. Thus the technique of management lately evolved by the Bank puts it in its power to adjust the resources of the clearing banks to the needs of trade and employment. We are no longer at the mercy of the blind and perverse forces which ensured, in pre-war days that, as soon as we began to move towards prosperity and optimum employment, factors would begin to be generated which would shortly throw us back again into the pit which we had lately climbed out of.

Moreover, in present circumstances, the increased basis of credit which the Bank of England would have to provide might prove to be moderate in amount. In the first place, part of the clearing banks' existing advances represents frozen rather than active credit, so that increased demands for current credit will be partly met by the repayment of old advances; whilst some of the largest concerns in the country are now much less dependent on bank-borrowing than was the case with the constituent businesses out of which they have been formed. But, apart from this, an increase of (say) £20,000,000 in the Bank of England's assets would enable the clearing banks to increase their aggregate advances by 25 per cent., which should be fully adequate to all requirements unless there is to be a large rise in wages and other costs.

It is clear, therefore, that there is no necessity for reviving trade to break the gilt-edged market unless the authorities desire this to happen. So I return to the fundamental reasons, as I see them, why the authorities should in fact desire just the contrary.

There is, surely, overwhelming evidence that even the present reduced rate of 3½ per cent. on long-term gilt-edged stocks is far above the equilibrium level—meaning by "equilibrium" the rate which is compatible with the full employment of our resources of men and of equipment. It is often forgotten that 3½ per cent. is much in excess of the average yield on Consols, which ruled over the forty years previous to the war, namely, just under 3 per cent., or even the average yield which ruled over the eighty years from 1835 to 1914, namely, just over 3 per cent. The argument that this comparison is vitiated by the income tax which the lender must now pay is quite invalid if we are considering the "equilibrium" rate, rather than the actual market rate; for the rate which the borrower can afford to pay depends in the long run on the yield of capital-assets and is not increased by reason of taxes on the lender. Yet during the nineteenth century the annual amount which the community was disposed to save when it was fully employed was much below what it is to-day, whereas the outlets for profitable investment were vastly greater on account of the rapid growth of population and the opening up of new worlds overseas. With the opportunities for safe and profitable investment abroad greatly curtailed, as much by the unfortunate results of past investment as by the diminished opportunities for new investment, Great Britain and the United States would, if they were to return to the full employment of their resources, save sums so vast that they could not possibly be invested to yield anything approaching 3½ per cent. No one can foretell at what point the rate of interest will reach its equilibrium level until we actually approach it. But it is highly probable that the equilibrium rate is not above 2½ per cent. for long-term gilt-edged investment, and may be appreciably less. In the early days of a recovery, whilst working capital is being restored and various postponements of renewals and fresh development are being overtaken, it is true that business can temporarily stand a higher rate. But the longer the recovery lasts, the further will the appropriate long-term rate of interest have to fall. If when the recovery is well on its way, the Bank of England so manages the basis of credit as to force the clearing banks to sell their investments on a substantial scale or otherwise to weaken the long-term loan market, then, indeed, it is as certain that depression will follow recovery as that night follows day.

But why, in making our prognostications, should we attribute such disastrous ideas to our financial authorities? No institution is more interested than the Treasury in a falling rate of interest. The further we move from the abnormal rates of the war period, the clearer, I believe, will it become to everyone that our economic health needs a rate of interest appreciably below, and not above, the nineteenth century level. There is no harm in the fall of the rate of interest being gradual, but it is a necessity for the epoch into which we are now entering that there should be a steady movement in the downward direction. In each of the last three years, I have ventured, in addressing you, to predict a falling rate of interest. I say to-day with undiminished conviction that we are still some way from the end of the journey and that the course of events which I forecast three years ago will still continue in the same direction.

I hope that I have not burdened your attention with so long a disquisition on general matters. But I need scarcely emphasise how important it is for those who are responsible for the conduct of a life office to ponder these matters, since our business consists in entering into long-term contracts, the fulfilment of which depends on our earning not less than a certain assumed rate of interest. And I may add that, however the result may turn out, the course of prudence for a life office undoubtedly lies in leaning towards a conservative view as to the future rate of interest and in taking such measures as are possible to protect the position in the event of this rate moving steadily downwards. That is the policy of your Board; and whilst, if my forecast proves correct, we shall not be able to avoid many perplexities, yet you may feel assured that we shall be as fully protected as we know how.

The report and accounts were unanimously adopted.